

The American Conservative

The well of ideas that so richly watered conservative **political successes** from the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 through the Republican capture of the House of Representatives in 1994 ran dry before the Clinton years ran out. Most conservatives know that liberalism suffered political eclipse as a consequence of **intellectual aridity**. Why were they surprised when a similar conservative idea deficit led to **electoral defeat**?

Paul M. Weyrich and William S. Lind
The Next Conservatism

BRYAN '08

Doug Bandow's brilliant review of David Kuo's *Tempting Faith* (Dec. 18, 2006), should put the whole question of evangelicals and the Bush administration in its proper perspective. Evangelicals—and I am a reformed evangelical, to be precise—have not been the makers of the Bush foreign policy, although they have been getting the blame. The fault of many evangelicals, as Kuo notes, is that they have become blind followers of the Republican Party.

The articles on William Jennings Bryan by James P. Pinkerton and Bill Kauffman (July 31, 2006) presented excellent historical perspectives on evangelicals in American politics. In foreign policy, Bryan was a strong anti-interventionist. He resigned as secretary of state from the Wilson administration in 1916, justifying that decision in the book *Road to War*. Of course Bryan is more remembered for his role in the Scopes Monkey Trial a decade later, and after that, evangelicals for the most part were on the margins of American public life. Today's evangelicals should read up on Bryan, for the great orator does represent where they once stood on foreign policy.

ALEX GREER

Victoria, British Columbia

WHERE'S PAT?

Is Mr. Buchanan for or against the war? In print, he's obviously opposed. On TV, I can't tell, but he seems determined to defend President Bush's "surge." How can you be against a war but favor something that will prolong it and get more people killed? It's an act of desperation in a lost cause. I don't get it.

THOMAS QUINLAN

via e-mail

A HOUSE DIVIDED

Daniel McCarthy notes that though the libertarian alliance with conservatives has always suffered internal contradictions and tensions, they have always come back to each other (Jan. 29). But

time changes all things, and there are plenty of good reasons to believe they won't continue in a loveless marriage. Older libertarians may have sought to protect traditional liberties and a culture of self-reliance in a conservative constitutional order, but young libertarians increasingly find freedom in the whirlwind of cultural liberation afforded to them by global capitalism. For modern libertarians it's no longer "our enemy, the State" but "our enemy, Authority itself."

This means libertarians are culturally more at ease with liberals than they are with home schoolers and social conservatives. Cultural identification counts for a lot. Modern libertarians were elated at the defeat of Sen. Rick Santorum, less because of his adventurous foreign policy or his violations of free market doctrine than because of his identification with tough, socially conservative Catholicism. The near future also presents issues on which conservatives and libertarians are bound to disagree: biotechnology, further advances in reproductive technology, and the further dissolution of family life. The Cold War that united us is over. The Culture War will break us apart.

HENRY H. WINSTON

Gardiner, Maine

NEXT WAR WATCH

Long-time conservative Republicans in our past, both my husband and I are now Democrats. However, we look forward every two weeks to reading *The American Conservative*, which we have subscribed to since its first publication. We find many of the articles deeply thoughtful, well-written, and very informative. It gives voice to what's missing in the current conservative position in America.

I was inspired to write this letter, though, when I heard Pat Buchanan on television yesterday speaking out passionately about the need to understand and stop any potential (hidden) administration plans to take military action

against Iran. I am so grateful he is speaking out about this. Please keep it up.

MARLO BENDAU

Santa Monica, Calif.

ART OF THE POSSIBLE

Andrew Bacevich is as tough on James Baker, whom he labels "the trusted Bush family factotum," as he is on Bush and the neocons (Jan. 29). I wonder if he isn't glossing over some politically and morally crucial distinctions.

True, Baker and those parts of the Washington establishment who signed on to the Iraq Study Group do assume that the Persian Gulf represents a "vital strategic interest" and agree that the United States has "no alternative" but to seek to influence the region. But politics is, as is often said, the art of the possible. The Bush/Kagan option does represent one course the United States may actually take. Some form of negotiation with the countries in the region, combined with an effort to solve the Israeli-Palestinian imbroglio—and everyone knows the solution—represents another. Each likely has dramatically different real-world consequences—the latter, of course far better than the former.

As far as I can see, there is no chance that in the near future the United States will wean itself from Mideast oil and eschew meddling in the region, even though it probably should. But pursuing a course that lowers temperatures, and lessens the hatreds the Bush/neocon policy has generated, is so clearly an improvement that it shouldn't be shrugged off as just another variant of the Washington "Great Game" Bacevich so acidly describes.

STEVEN ERHART

via e-mail

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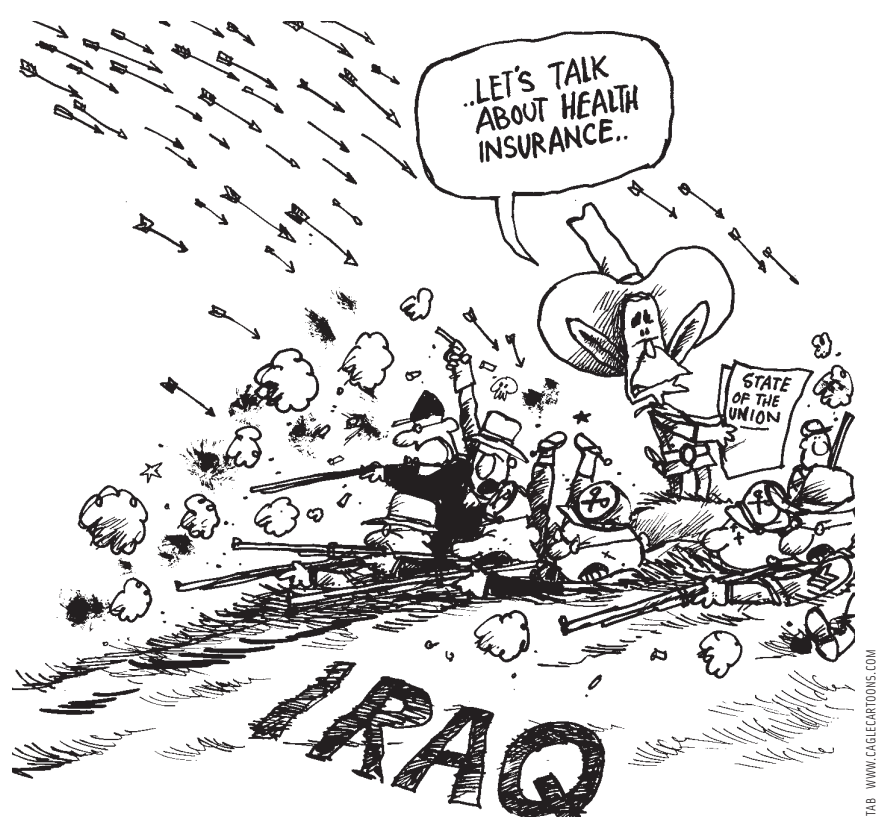
[BELTWAY]

WEBB GEM

Whatever one thinks of the domestic initiatives front-loaded in the State of the Union, it is a safe bet that they won't dominate American politics over the next two years. Foreign-policy questions and pure electoral maneuvering will. In these realms, the package was in one sense an improvement over the past five years: here was a subdued Bush facing an audience that did not wildly applaud his railings against "evil." He did, however, persist in the same deceptive efforts to conflate Iran and Hezbollah with al-Qaeda as he once did with Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. But now it's a harder sell.

The Democrats helped themselves by choosing Sen. James Webb to deliver the rebuttal. The Virginian ripped up the talking points given to him by Party Central and gave a challenging talk. The rising inequality in American life is a complex problem with causes—globalization, immigration, and the information economy, among others—for which there will be no simple answers, socialism having failed the viability test. But Webb deserves credit for addressing the subject instead of resorting to typical neoliberal boilerplate about "a woman's right to choose" etc.

And it was good to hear, from someone who has served in the military and has a son serving, about the total wrong-headedness of the war—no half-baked, focus-grouped reservations about Bush's "failure to manage the occupation effectively." The Iraq invasion, Webb said, was "unnecessary," "take[s] our attention from the larger war against terrorism," and leaves us "strategically vulnerable in the most violent and turbulent corner of the world." When he told Americans that if Bush does not bring the Iraq folly to an end, "we will be showing him the way," Webb laid down the proper course for his own party.



TAB WWW.CAGLEARTISTS.COM

[ELECTION]

GOOD DIVERSITY

With the New Year has come the quickening of the 2008 presidential contest. For those who viewed the seemingly inevitable Clinton-McCain contest (Hillaryhawk vs. überhawk) as a symptom of the final degradation of the American democratic system, early signs are encouraging. On the GOP side, interesting congressional figures have announced exploratory committees. Dr. Ron Paul of Texas, obstetrician, former Libertarian candidate for president, and present inspiration to all who value civil liberties and a non-imperialist foreign policy, will give eloquent representation to the many conservatives who knew invading Iraq was a bad idea from the beginning. Tom Tancredo of Colorado, the guiding force behind the potent immigration-reform caucus in the House and the politician perhaps most responsible for blocking Bush's amnesty plan, has indicated he will run. Historically, it has been difficult to launch successful presidential campaigns from the House, but both figures should be able to focus attention on two areas where the Republican establishment has lost touch with the great majority of Americans.

On the Democratic side, two men with unusual political charisma are breathing down Hillary's neck. John Edwards was generally more popular

than Democratic standard-bearer John Kerry in 2004, and his repudiation of his Iraq War vote of 2002 will give his views a wider resonance. It's early to say whether the well spoken, thin, and comparatively youthful Barack Obama will wear well as the country gets to know him better, but he clearly taps into a national yearning for something new and completely different. Although both are running to the left on social issues, they may reap a windfall of moderates alienated by the damage the Bush-Cheney crowd has inflicted upon American conservatism.

[NEOCONS]

FIRE STARTERS

Having played a producer role in immersing the country in tragedy (see PNAC, AEI, and Iraq), Washington's neo-conservative think tanks are now moving on to farce. The Ethics and Public Policy Center has announced that recently defeated Republican Sen. Rick Santorum will head up its new America's Enemies program.

Santorum, who spent his campaign channeling Winston Churchill and muttering about "Islamofascism" while managing to lose by an incredible 18 points in purple Pennsylvania, should be ideal for the post. He tells *National Review* that the enemies list has grown bigger:

"It's not just Islamic fascism, but also Venezuela, North Korea, and increasingly, in my opinion, Russia." Perhaps he forgot about France.

And if George W. Bush keeps it up, there may be even more countries for Rick's list. A recent poll of 26,000 people in 26 countries showed pronounced deterioration of global esteem for the U.S., with more than half saying America played a mainly negative role in the world.

The center has not yet announced a theme song for the Santorum project, but sources tell us that Randy Newman's 1972 classic "Political Science" is in the running. Remember? "Boom goes London, Boom Paree/ More room for you and more room for me/ They all hate us anyhow/ So let's drop the big one now."

[ALLIES]

ISRAEL PRIMARY

It's to be expected that Benjamin Netanyahu and Ehud Olmert would address the recent conference on Israeli security in Herzliya, a resort town near Tel Aviv. Nor is it unusual that Richard Perle and friends made the trip. They're fixtures on that circuit, even as they continue to claim that it doesn't influence U.S. policy.

But Americans may be surprised to learn that a third of their aspiring presidential candidates were tripping over each other to make speeches about Israel's security—Mitt Romney and Rudy Giuliani in person and John McCain, Newt Gingrich, and John Edwards by satellite. All recited the customary pledge of allegiance, but loudest applause belonged to the one most willing commit American might against Israel's enemies. Romney took top prize with his thunderous "One, Iran must be stopped. Two, Iran can be stopped. And three, Iran will be stopped." Edwards scored honorable mention for the claim that disarming Tehran is "the greatest

challenge of our generation."

New Hampshire may have other ideas, but those interests were a world away.

[CULTURE]

DINNER FOR ONE

The *New York Times* reports, "For what experts say is probably the first time, more American women are living without a husband than with one." Compared to 35 percent in 1950, 51 percent of American women now live sans spouse—and by the *Times*' reckoning, they couldn't be happier.

The paper finds divorcees "delighting in their newfound freedom"—"Now I have choices," a woman just out of a 34-year marriage enthused. "One night I slept on the other side of the bed and I thought, I like this side." Never-marrieds seem equally pleased to fly solo. A 32-year-old model/musician, after twice living with a boyfriend, muses that if she marries, "I may opt to keep a place of my own." Then there's the career girl who doesn't rule out a trip down the aisle, "but if I do wed, it will be to have a companion with whom I can travel and play parlor games in my old age."

Experts hail the tipping point: "This suggests that most girls growing up today can look forward to spending more of their lives outside of a traditional marriage," says the Brookings Institution's William H. Frey.

But scratch the surface, and for all those singles who revel in the freedom to sample both sides of the bed, more will admit that sleeping alone isn't optimal. Children rarely choose one parent when they might have two. And few girls, no matter how modern, "look forward" to shacking up rather than showing off a solitaire.

There's a reason the traditional family has held across centuries and cultures: it's what women want. And for all their declarations of independence, more than 49 percent still do. ■

The American Conservative

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The American Conservative, Vol. 6, No. 3, February 12, 2007 (ISSN 1540-966X). Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off. TAC is published 24 times per year, biweekly (except for January and August) for \$49.97 per year by The American Conservative, LLC, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209. Periodicals postage paid at Arlington, VA, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the United States of America. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030.

Subscription rates: \$49.97 per year (24 issues) in the U.S., \$54.97 in Canada (U.S. funds), and \$69.97 other foreign (U.S. funds). Back issues: \$6.00 (prepaid) per copy in USA, \$7.00 in Canada (U.S. funds).

For subscription orders, payments, and other subscription inquiries—

By phone: **800-579-6148**
(outside the U.S./Canada 856-380-4131)

Via Web: www.amconmag.com

By mail: *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

When ordering a subscription please allow 4–6 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

Inquiries and letters to the editor should be sent to letters@amconmag.com. For advertising sales or editorial call 703-875-7600.

This issue went to press on January 25, 2007.
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The 2008 X Factor

After a weekend in which 29 Americans died and the 82nd Airborne deployed in Baghdad, what the Iraq War will mean to the politics of 2008 becomes clear.

Hillary Clinton's early Saturday announcement of her exploratory committee was brilliantly executed and captured front page, cable, and network coverage all weekend. But it was a decision forced upon her.

Barack Obama, the "rock star," has been poaching on Hillary's donor lists and offering Democrats, in the style of New York mayoral candidate John V. Lindsay in 1965—"He is fresh and they are all tired"—a post-Bush-Clinton-Bush politics that says, "Goodbye to all that."

John Edwards has pitched his tent in the Cindy Sheehan camp. The Sunday preceding Dr. King's birthday, he rose in New York City's Riverside Church, where King had denounced the Vietnam War, to decry Bush's surge of 21,500 troops as "the McCain Doctrine," called for immediate withdrawal of 40,000-50,000 U.S. troops, and threw down the gauntlet to Hillary, declaring, "Silence is betrayal."

By midweek, Hillary was out with her own plan for redeployment.

The Democratic nominee will likely be one of these three. In every national or Iowa-New Hampshire poll, they are first, second, or third. But there is a wild card.

On Feb. 25, America will watch the Academy Awards where the Oscar for best documentary will likely go to "An Inconvenient Truth." If Gore wins the Oscar, addresses the nation for two minutes on global warming and the war, then appears on Oprah, Leno, Letterman, Stewart, and Colbert, a subsequent declaration of candidacy would put him in the top tier. And unlike Edwards and Hillary, Gore opposed the war.

In the Democratic Party, the Iraq War is a lost cause that ought never to have been begun, and any candidate who has not come to that position by February 2007 will not be the nominee.

In the Republican Party, the war is less likely to bring about the unity Democrats will have achieved by year's end. For by summer's end the surge will be over. While there may have been a temporary reduction in massacres by then, no one believes an additional 21,500 troops in a Texas-sized nation of 26 million can turn around a war General Powell says we "are losing" and Bush concedes "we are not winning."

Already nearly a fifth of the Republicans in the Senate, including Chuck Hagel and presidential candidate Sam Brownback, have come out against the surge. The frontrunners, Giuliani, McCain, and Romney, however, still back the president.

But while McCain is far out in front in raising money and lining up support, he is also the single national figure, beyond Bush and Cheney, most identified with the least popular war in U.S. history. If McCain wishes to be president, it would be best for him for this war to be in its final act, one way or the other, by 2008.

If the war has been lost by then, as many believe it is already, McCain can say: Rumsfeld lost it because he fought it the wrong way, and we shall never do that again. But if the war is still going on, it will be the issue of 2008, and it is hard to see America voting to continue or embrace the "McCain Doctrine" and escalate by sending in 100,000 more troops.

The GOP is thus looking at a situation in 2008, where the party will be as divided as Democrats were with McCarthy, Humphrey, Bobby Kennedy, and LBJ in 1968, while Democrats will be as united as the GOP was under Nixon. Had George Wallace, who got 13 percent, been out of the race, Nixon would have won a landslide.

Anything that might alter the course of events and affect the war picture by 2008? Indeed: a preemptive strike on Iran.

Should it occur, writes Wayne White, an intelligence officer at State until 2005, "Such action would likely involve not only taking out widely dispersed nuclear-related targets and nearby anti-aircraft defenses, but also portions of the Iranian air force assigned to defend these targets. And that's just for starters.

"In order to reduce Iran's ability to retaliate in the Persian Gulf such a plan would probably also include taking out Iran's array of anti-ship missiles along the northern coast of the Gulf, its Kilo-class submarines, other naval assets and even some targets related to Iran's long-range missile capabilities."

Is such an attack being considered? Nick Burns, No. 3 at State, was at the Herzliya Conference this weekend. "Iran is seeking a nuclear weapon; there's no doubt about it," Burns told the Israelis, "the policy of the United States is that we cannot allow Iran to become a nuclear weapons state."

Burns was cheered and echoed by ex-Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz: "The year of 2007 is the year of decisiveness. ... the free world doesn't have the privilege to drag its feet on Iran and hope for best."

Democrats failed to stop this war. Can they stop the next one? Or do they suspect, and silently support, what they think is coming? ■

The Next Conservatism

By rejecting ideology and embracing “retroculture,” the Right can recover itself and perhaps reverse America’s decline.

By Paul M. Weyrich and William S. Lind

The only surprise about the Republican debacle in the 2006 congressional elections was that many conservatives found it surprising. For at least a decade, the conservative movement has been on intellectual cruise control. The well of conservative ideas that so richly watered conservative political successes from the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 through the Contract with America and the Republican capture of the House of Representatives in 1994 ran dry before the Clinton years ran out. Most conservatives know that liberalism suffered political eclipse as a consequence of intellectual aridity, of an agenda that had become a museum piece of New Deal-era class warfare.

Why were they surprised when a similar conservative idea deficit led to a similar electoral defeat? Just as you can’t beat something with nothing, the 2006 vote showed that conservatives can’t beat nothing with nothing.

Conservatism has become so weak in ideas that during the presidency of George W. Bush, the word “conservative” could be and was applied with scant objection to policies that were starkly anti-conservative. Americans witnessed “conservative” Wilsonianism, if not Jacobinism, in foreign policy and an unnecessary foreign war; record “conservative” trade and federal budget deficits; major “conservative” expansions of the power of the federal government at the expense of traditional liberties; and nonchalant “conservative” de-industrialization and dispossession of the middle class in the name of Ricardian free trade and Benthamite utilitarianism. No wonder the American people are confused and disillusioned by conservatism if these are its actions when in power. Were Russell Kirk still with us, what would he now call himself?

If conservatism is to be re-established as an intellectual force, and not merely a label for whatever the establishment does to its own benefit, it must first re-awaken intellectually. We need a new conservative agenda.

Since well before the 2006 elections, the authors of this essay have sought to begin the discussion of the next conservatism. Our motive was not solely political success. We recognized some time ago that the old conservative agenda,

comprised largely of anti-communism and free-market economics, had run its course. It was born in the Cold War and much though not all of it became obsolescent once that war was won. The next conservatism, in our view, has to come to grips with a new and different external reality, one in which “the permanent things” remain permanent but must be related to new phenomena. Our starting point was Kirk’s observation that conservatism is not an ideology. Rather, it is a way of life.

Ideology, a child of the French Revolution, says that according to thus-and-such set of abstract principles, reality must be thus-and-so. Inevitably, reality is too complex to fit the ideological Procrustean bed. When that happens, the ideology in question decrees that certain aspects of reality, those that conflict with its precepts, must be ignored. If the ideology, through politics, achieves control of a state, it uses the power of the state to enforce its decree. Anyone who dares doubt that all of history is a factor of the ownership of the means of production or of the superiority of Aryan blood or of the inherent evil of white men and Western civilization is penalized by the state. If the ideology gains sufficient power, the penalty becomes the concentration camp, the Gulag, or the bullet into the back of the neck in the basement of the Lubyanka.

Real conservatism rejects all ideologies, recognizing them as armed cant. In their place, it offers a way of life built upon customs, traditions, and habits—themselves the products of the experiences of many generations. Because people are capable of learning over time, when they may do so in a specific, continuous cultural setting, the conservative way of life comes to reflect the prudential virtues: modesty, the dignity of labor, conservation and saving, the importance of family and community, personal duties and obligations, and caution in innovation. While these virtues tend to manifest themselves in most traditional societies, with variations conservatives usually value, they have had their happiest outcome in the traditional culture of the Christian West.

From this it follows that the next conservatism’s foremost task is defending and restoring Western, Judeo-Christian culture. Not only does this mean the next conservatism is cultural conservatism, it also tells us we must look beyond politics.

While conservatives have won many political victories since the election of Ronald Reagan, the Left has continued to win the culture war. Unfortunately, culture is more powerful than politics. Conservatives have thus won tactically while losing strategically, with the consequence that American society has continued to decline into the abyss that opened before it in the 1960s.

If the next conservatism is to reverse this decline and begin to recover the America we knew as recently as the 1950s, the last normal decade, it must do three things. First, it must aspire to change not merely how people vote but how they live their lives. It must lead growing numbers of Americans to secede from the rotten pop culture of materialism, consumerism, hyper-sexualization, and political correctness and return to the old ways of living. The next conservatism includes “retroculture”: a conscious, deliberate recovery of the past.

This recovery should not be, indeed cannot be, imposed through political power. This is the second action the next conservatism must take: putting power in its place. Tolkien’s ring of power is power itself, which in the long run cannot be used for good. The rejection of the counterculture that has become the mainstream culture must proceed bottom-up, person by person and family by family, on a voluntary basis.

The model here is the home-schooling movement. Home schooling has rescued more than a million children from the culturally Marxist Skinner boxes that most public schools have become. The power behind this important act of secession has been the only safe form of power: power of example. The next conservatism must extend that power to many other aspects of daily life, starting with entertainment, the popular culture’s poisoned well. Kirk set the example by throwing off the roof a television his wife and children had smuggled into Piety Hill.

By building the next conservatism primarily on the power of example, the example of lives well lived in the old ways, we can give honest reassurance to those Americans who fear that a vibrant cultural conservatism would impose some sort of Puritan theocracy on America. We may dismiss those fears as fanciful, but they are real.

Cultural Marxists have largely captured the powers of the state and use those powers to force their ideology through government policies from affirmative action to public-school curricula to the imposition of feminism on America’s Armed Forces. This points to the third thing the next conservatism must do: restore the American Republic by stripping the state of culturally Marxist ideology in all its dimensions.

A Republic devoted to liberty imposes no ideology on its citizens. The government has no business mandating

diversity of races or sexes in hiring or school admissions, or forcing the armed services to make women into fighter pilots and ship captains, or “celebrating” homosexuality in the workplace, or any of the other myriad of actions the state now takes to impose political correctness.

The need for de-Marxification—not Moscow’s Marxism, but that of the Frankfurt School—of the American government points to another aspect of the next conservatism: while the restoration of our traditional culture should not be imposed through political power, conservatives must remain active in politics. The next conservatism is more than politics, but it includes politics. Were conservatives to turn away from politics altogether—something to which justified frustrations with the Republican Party could lead—the result would be disastrous.

The other side has no compunction about using state power in all its hideous fullness to ram its ideology down our throats. For example, leftists now want to restore the so-called “fairness doctrine,” which if implemented would destroy talk radio. Our agenda of restoring the Republic demands that we have sufficient power to stop them, to reverse course where they have already created an ideological state and to return American government to the powers envisioned by the Founders and enumerated in the Constitution. That is no small political agenda.

In summary, then, the next conservatism as we envision it is cultural conservatism, with an agenda both cultural and political, and activity both within and beyond the political process. It seeks to win elections with no less ardor than in 1980 or 1994, but, having perhaps more realistic expectations of what politics can do, it includes a bottom-up, grassroots movement, similar to the home-schooling movement or the 19th-century temperance movement, devoted to restoring traditional ways of living.

What sort of specifics might the next conservative agenda include? Clearly some elements carry over from the current conservative agenda. The next conservatism still opposes abortion and supports traditional marriage. It seeks further cuts in marginal tax rates, though it insists on spending cuts as well, and a balanced federal budget. It wants a strong national defense, including missile defense. It demands effective control of our borders, elimination of illegal immigration, a reduction in legal immigration, and effective acculturation of recent immigrants. English should become America’s official language, the only language in which any government business may be conducted.

But the next conservatism also looks to new situations.

Its agenda should include the abandonment of a Wilsonian foreign policy, which is promoted by neoconservatives and

neoliberals alike, and a return to a policy based on America's concrete interests. Following the disaster of the war in Iraq, the American people may again be open to a non-interventionist foreign policy, as advocated more than half a century ago by Sen. Robert A. Taft. The next conservatism should explain that a realistic foreign policy is not isolationism, which is a bogeyman invented by globalists. America was never Japan under the Bakufu. Rather, through most of our history we related to the rest of the world, actively and successfully, through the private means of trade and ideas rather than by playing the game of Great Power. The Founders warned that we could either preserve liberty at home or seek Great Power status but not both. The next conservatism prefers liberty to the trappings of empire.

“Strip malls, suburban sprawl, and hollowed-out cities have created an environment few people can love.”

In Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, we face Fourth Generation war, not against state militaries similar to our own but non-state forces that fight very differently. While the next conservatism favors a strong defense, it should also question the hundreds of billions of dollars we pour annually into legacy forces and weapons suitable only for fighting other states. A strong defense requires military reform, not just heaps of money.

Along with military reform, the next conservatism should also call for political reform. Restoring the Republic requires breaking the monopoly of professional politicians and two parties that are for the most part one party—the Party of I’ve Got Mine. The next conservatism should promote increased use of ballot initiatives and referenda, term limits, putting “none of the above” on the ballot and requiring a new election with new candidates if it wins, and ending legalized bribery under the name of campaign contributions. Yes, they sell their votes. The two-party monopoly has generated a vast culture of corruption in Washington, and corruption is any republic’s deadliest enemy.

Further, the next conservatism should revive the dormant conservative agrarian tradition. As the Amish demonstrate, the small family farm can be economically viable. Organic farming, conservation and restoration of the soil, farmers’ markets and “crunchy cons” should find an honored place in the next conservative agenda. Family farms are good places for children to grow up. While environmentalism is becoming an ideology, conservation and care in the use of God’s creation have

long-standing conservative credentials. In turn, agriculture has always been a conservative culture.

Similarly, the next conservatism should include the issue of scale of enterprise. Conservatives have long recognized the danger big government poses to free markets. Is there not a similar threat from big business enterprises, especially when those enterprises are international corporations with no concern for the homeland? Is the market truly free when vast corporations can manipulate prices and politicians to destroy local businesses, both manufacturers and retailers, that are anchored in the local community and contribute to it in ways big companies do not? When everything for sale is labeled “Made in China,” Heaven decrees fair trade instead of free trade.

Another old conservative issue the next conservatism should revive is aesthetics. America may be the richest nation in history, but that has not made it the most beautiful. Strip malls, suburban sprawl, and hollowed-out cities have created an environment few people can love. The New Urbanism offers an alternative that looks to the past to recover traditional designs for towns and cities. The next conservatism should incorporate New Urbanism but not on the Portland, Oregon model of urban growth boundaries and the like (inside of which you find, surprise, more sprawl!). Rather, the next conservatism should promote dual building codes. Developers could choose to build to existing sprawl codes or Traditional Neighborhood Design codes, depending on what they think the market wants.

Relatedly, the next conservatism should promote the return of trains and streetcars as alternatives to dependence on automobiles. The private automobile is a great way to travel as long as not many people have one. At present, the proliferation of cars creates such congestion that everyone, liberals and conservatives alike, wastes vast amounts of time sitting in traffic. Not even a Mercedes sports car is much fun when it can’t move. Bringing back trains and trolleys can save us time and help revitalize our cities. The future energy situation also makes it likely that coming generations will thank us for re-creating the network of trains and streetcar lines America once enjoyed. Here as elsewhere, the next conservatism should take the long view.

One of conservatism’s most fundamental impulses, and one of its most valuable in a time when history is neglected or forgotten, is to recover good things from the past. Traditional cities and towns, passenger trains and streetcars, are examples of this tendency, which we label retroculture. The next conservatism should incorporate retroculture as one of its guiding themes, a basis for its actions beyond politics. Want to fix the public schools? How about Schools

1950? We already have retro cars such as Volkswagen's New Beetle and the Mini. Why not retro manners and retro dress? It would be nice to see men's and ladies' hats again instead of kids' underwear. By making old things new, retroculture might offer a counterweight to the endless spiral downward that pop culture decrees in everything. If fire is needed to fight fire, perhaps fashion should be used to fight fashion.

A troubling and difficult issue the next conservatism should confront is the social and cultural effects of technology. There are good aspects of technology. The Internet provides the ability to communicate without gatekeepers. But technology also poses some difficult questions. Is a post-literate culture something conservatives should accede to, drifting on the tide? Having spent 3,000 bloody years replacing the image with the word, should we now be untroubled that television, video games, and computer screens are replacing the word with the image? Do virtual realities not concern us, even as they lead our fellow citizens onward into Brave New World? As with the family farm, the Amish may offer us a model here, not in that everyone should become Amish but in that their community has a process for evaluating technologies for their social and moral effects while society as a whole does not. Conservatism has always been cautious about innovations, and the next conservatism's caution should lead it to think hard about where technology is taking us.

“Retroculture might offer a counterweight to the endless spiral downward that pop culture decrees in everything.”

This list is not exhaustive, but we will end it before we exhaust our readers. There is one final element of the next conservatism we would add. The next conservatism, if it is to be more than an intellectual parlor game, requires a new conservative movement.

Both of these authors have been involved in the conservative movement since they were in high school, back in the Pleistocene. The movement's main problem over all those years has been its tendency to subordinate itself to the Republican Party.

During George W. Bush's presidency, this tendency grew so powerful that most of the Washington elements of the conservative movement became wholly owned subsidiaries of the Republican Party. Grassroots conservative activists

and many movement leaders outside Washington, especially those on the Religious Right, did not fall into this trap. But buckets of Republican money poured into conservative institutions that were willing to play the game, so most did. To the conservative movement's recent intellectual sterility, Republican Party ownership added corruption.

The obvious consequence was the phenomenon we noted at the outset, “conservative” endorsement of Bush administration policies that were actually anti-conservative. The next conservative movement will not be credible if it is led by people and institutions that sold out to today's equivalent of Rockefeller Republicanism. Nor can support for policies such as Wilsonianism and reverse mercantilism be reconciled with the next conservative agenda.

The problem, however, runs deeper than policies, deeper even than credibility. The Republican Party's ultimate goal, because it is a political party, will always be winning elections. Once that is accomplished, the task becomes preparing to win the next election. There is and can be no higher goal than political victory because that is what political parties exist to obtain.

But the essence of the next conservatism, as we have argued here, must be that it does not stop with politics. It seeks political success, but it reaches beyond that goal in a quest to retake the culture from ideology generally and from sheer decadence. It wants to restore the old ways of life, the ways in which the vast majority of Americans lived up through the 1950s. If it fails in this, if conservatives continue to win politically while losing the culture war, it will have failed in everything.

So the next conservative movement is just this: a growing coalition of people who are committed to living differently. They share a common rejection of the popular culture, of a life based on wants and instant gratification, and of the ideology of multiculturalism and political correctness. They seek to work with other Americans, and perhaps Europeans as well, who know the past was better than the present and are committed to living as their ancestors did, by the rules of Western culture. They carry their quest into the political arena, lest their enemies mobilize the power of the state to crush them. But they look beyond politics to lives well lived in the old ways, as lamps for their neighbors' footsteps, as harbingers of a world restored, and as testimonies to the only safe form of power, the power of example. We might add, as gifts to God as well. ■

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Future Cons

By James P. Pinkerton

There's much to admire in a piece that summons Americans back to "prudential values," based on "customs, traditions, and habits." But at the same time, since our lives are, as the authors correctly assert, the products of our experiences, plenty of room must be allowed for new experiences.

To put it politely, there's a bit of contradiction between the authors' clarion call for a "Next Conservatism" and their lyrical urging to "restore the old ways of life, the ways in which the vast majority of Americans lived up through the 1950s." Either you go forward, or you go backward. You can't do both. And more to the point, going backward isn't truly an option—you can't go home again.

As the wise Edmund Burke reminded us, the task for the statesman is to channel the tides of change through the canals of custom. That's why Burke supported modest and incremental change. He defended the conservatism of the American Revolution, even as he abhorred the radicalism of the French Revolution. Yes, the past must be venerated, but the future must be accommodated.

So the authors' hymn to "retroculture" is not going to be heard by many. If they wish to see "men's and ladies' hats" restored, that's quite all right. Reactionary cultural flourishes are harmless enough. Today's hipsters, after all, seem to adore octogenarian Tony Bennett. And it will always be thus; in Neal Stephenson's 1995 sci-fi novel, *The Diamond Age*, the "Neo-Victorians" favor handmade garments in their own little niche realm, even as they revel in the worldwide economic potential of the latest nanotechnology.

And that's the point: technology is here to stay. The authors can admire Russell Kirk for pushing a TV set off the roof, but George Gilder is a better guide for conservatives wishing to use computerized and networked TVs to navigate safely the inevitably Mumfordian future.

Indeed, the authors might wish to reflect on the dolorous reality that throughout human history avowed conservatives have opposed technology, seeing it as the dangerous handmaiden of a force they fear even more: progress. Yet since the end of the Dark Ages, technology has been unstoppable.

In the last thousand years or so, conservatives have often kneejerkily opposed technology, thereby forcing technophiles to conclude that they have to embrace a worldview other than conservatism. Communists, fascists, and mere

liberals, on the other hand, have been happy to endorse technology and growth—especially if they could use technology as a substitute, or hoped-for substitute, for freedom.

So conservatism has often been routed. And nowhere has the defeat for "old ways" been more spectacular than on the battlefield. The old verities have been defeated, literally, as traditional militaries have been annihilated by radical new technologies, emblemized by the machine gun, tank, and airplane. And let's not forget weapons of mass destruction—nothing conservative about them, and yet they aren't going anywhere. So much for retroculture.

The better role models, in keeping with the spirit of Burke, are those consciously conservative groups who nonetheless embrace technology—for example, the Mormons. Nobody questions their commitment to family values, and to big-family values, but they are comfortable with the latest gadgetry. (Ask anyone who has used their genealogical databases to track down a family tree.) Indeed, it might be my imagination, but it seems as if every Latter Day Saint in Utah is a software engineer.

More broadly, evangelical Protestantism seems to be doing a pretty good job at channeling change through custom. A visit to a megachurch is an eye-opener. Everything is gleaming and high-tech, like an office park—no wonder office-park workers feel so comfortable worshipping inside them. And while it is true that some will always yearn for an oakier and smokier religion, it is equally true that those avowedly old believers will always be in the minority. Happily, both styles of religious experience are safe so long as they stick together to confront the latest onslaught from litigious secular authoritarians.

Which, of course, is a reminder that the Next Conservatism needs to be more just than a jeremiad. As the authors say, conservatism must maintain its political currency—it must be able to win elections.

Specifically, true conservatives should realize that Americans don't want retroculture. They want American Culture. Conservative-leaning nationalism, deeply informed by religion, is the most powerful force in America—and that's a good thing. Plain old patriotism is the hammer that has smashed, and will continue to smash, the nation-negating ideologies of communism, world federalism, and neoconservatism.

The American Conservative can be part of that ongoing powerful movement, if its writers and readers remember that the 21st century is here to stay. ■

James P. Pinkerton is a columnist for Newsday. He served in the White House under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

Not Your Father's Conservatism

By John Derbyshire

Well, Paul Weyrich and William Lind have certainly offered a comprehensive program. Trade policy, military reform, urban esthetics, ballot initiatives. Our authors have boxed the compass. Much of what they offer is hard to disagree with. Term limits? Yes, please. Ideologies as “armed cant”? Too true. Tax and spending cuts? Control of our borders? The power of example? Bring them on.

For all that, and with real and proper respect to these two battle-scarred veterans of American conservatism, there is a musty odor rising from their pages: the odor of nostalgia. The general tenor of this piece is a sort of geezer conservatism. Now, I am trembling on the brink of geezerhood myself and not altogether out of sympathy with the authors in their affection for 1957, which I can just about remember, and when, as best I recall, things went along pretty well. I am sorry to tell them, though, that 1957 is past and gone and will not come back.

The business of conservatism is not to get us all riding streetcars again or working on family farms. (When were farmers conservatives? Were not small farmers key components of the Progressive movement? Is there anyone more tenaciously attached to his federal subsidy than a farmer?) The business of conservatism is not to chase Wal-Mart out of town or to bring back men's hats. The business of conservatism is not to “recover the America we knew as recently as the 1950s,” even if that was “the last normal decade.” (What does that mean? Top personal income tax rates of 91 percent? Four-pack-a-day habits and four-martini lunches? European abortions for the rich, back-street abortions for the poor? Lobotomies and the psychoanalysis cult? The draft? Are those things normal?)

The business of conservatism is to conserve essential values and principles as future becomes present and present, past. The principles to be conserved are those our Republic was founded on: personal liberty, autonomy, and choice; self-sufficiency and self-support; limited government, loose federalism, and the rule of subsidiarity; freedom of speech, belief, assembly, and enterprise. There are now dire threats to all of these principles, and we ought to be

busy fighting those threats, not yearning for a lost idyll—an idyll in which, in fact, though many present evils were absent, many different evils were present that have since been overcome.

In public, as in private life, a degree of fatalism and resignation is appropriate. The old must ever give way to the young; new technologies must be weighed and welcomed if they bring convenience without harm; present evils must be vanquished but always with the understanding that new—though, one may always hope, lesser—evils will rise up in their place.

The future is always open and unpredictable. The great blind currents of technology and economics will never deliver what we expect. Those Americans of 1950 who, buying their first TV, imagined a future in which citizens would come home from their work at the factory to watch symphony concerts and lectures on metaphysics in their living rooms, could not have foreseen “American Idol” or the flight of our factories to China.

On the other hand, they could not have foreseen Rush Limbaugh or “South Park” either—wonderful new growths of the fine Anglo-American tradition of ribald social satire and scorn for authoritarian pieties. Nor could they have foreseen a China where state terror is no longer the dominating fact of people's lives and where a declared determination to overthrow American capitalism has given way to utter dependence on American consumer power.

“The business of conservatism is not to get us all riding streetcars again or working on family farms.”

Certainly our popular culture presents an unattractive sight. When did it not, though? Is Paris Hilton intrinsically more deplorable than Jayne Mansfield? Bette Midler than Mae West? Johnny Depp than Fatty Arbuckle?

I will certainly agree with what I think is Weyrich and Lind's objection here: that the zone of decorum has shrunk, that the coarse and ribald has advanced inwards from the periphery of popular culture to nearer the everyday center. I deplore that development as much as the next conservative. Even there, though, compensations must be weighed. We knew far more about the 42nd president's intimate life than we knew about the 35th's, more than many of us would have wished to know. With which set of knowledge, were we—we, the people—better equipped to estimate the character of our chief executive?

The state of our Republic today is pretty dire. Calls to rectify the situation by means of *Kulturkampf* seem to me misguided, however. The central problem of the United States today is not that people's brains are encrusted with filth but that they have been scrubbed so clean by puritan Left ideology that we have lost the ability to talk, even to think, about what ails us. This is as true over large parts of the conservative movement as it is in the popular culture at large. We cannot discuss what needs discussing, and we have stripped away defenses that will protect us when the coming tsunami of new understandings in the human sciences makes landfall.

The horrors and cruelties of our present political culture, from the million-page tax codes to our university speech codes, all have their origins in this turning away from reality. Rather than facing straightforward truths about our nature and condition and seeking to deal with them according to our customs and traditions, we have handed over our powers of judgment to that dark power Tocqueville spoke of so unforgettably, the power that: "...every day renders the exercise of the free agency of man less useful and less frequent; it circumscribes the will within a narrower range and gradually robs a man of all the uses of himself. The principle of equality has prepared men for these things; it has predisposed men to endure them and often to look on them as benefits."

We have lost the will even to expel lawless intruders from our territory or to smite our enemies with appropriate hatred and ruthlessness. We pretend to believe that one child's abilities in any sphere of activity are just the same as another's. We have persuaded ourselves that there is no deeper wickedness than to use our ordinary powers of discrimination in selecting those with whom we will associate or live amongst or trade with or employ. While we have surrendered our individual judgments to schoolmarm and scold, we have surrendered our collective judgments to legions of avaricious lawyers and mediocrities in black robes.

Things are, in short, pretty bad for America, and for that native vigor, that creative liberty, that thrusting irreverence to old hierarchies and dogmas that so dazzled and charmed mankind when Uncle Sam first strode onto the world's stage a century and a quarter ago, knocking over the props, hooting irreverently at the management, and offering the audience strange new visions of possibility.

Perhaps we can salvage some of that old vitality to fortify us in the coming storms. I certainly hope so. The salvaging won't be accomplished, though, supposing it can be accomplished, by turning us into a flock of hat-wearing, church-going, streetcar-riding, home-schooling, natural-produce-eating, "Lawrence Welk Show"-watching brownstone-dwellers.

Indeed, the more I look at the Weyrich-Lind vision of a reconstituted American culture—and setting aside their many excellent political prescriptions already noted—the less I see to distinguish it from the drab enforced rectitude of lefty-*völkisch* "communitarianism." The world is what it is and will become what it unguessably will become. It's pleasant to think of what it once was but not relevant to this fight. Geezer conservatism? Not for this geezer. ■

John Derbyshire is a contributing editor of National Review and the author of Prime Obsession.

Won By One

By David Franke

I am a curious choice to comment on a manifesto entitled "The Next Conservatism" in a magazine that includes the word "conservative" in its title since I am a religious agnostic and, in political terms, a libertarian, classical liberal, individualist, or radical—anything but conservative. Still, I respect the authors and admire the magazine and found myself nodding in agreement more than I initially expected.

I thought I was a hopeless romantic, wanting to dismantle the American Empire and return to the Republic of the Constitution. But Weyrich and Lind make me look like an incrementalist. They not only want what I want, they also want to return to "the 1950s, the last normal decade." (I suspect they really have an earlier date in mind—the 12th century, perhaps, "the last normal century"?) This is where I get off the train—and I love trains and trolleys almost as much as they do. I actually prefer the American society I live in today over the one I left behind in high school.

I suspect most Americans my age would, at first impulse, wax nostalgic about "the good old days" but in the end would choose to live in today's society. Of course we don't get that choice. I predict the Weyrich-Lind brand of cultural conservatism won't get very far because, while society is in constant change, it rarely, if ever, makes a U-turn to an idealized past. Totalitarian governments can seek to enforce a return to an imagined golden era, but even with all their power they fail. Given freedom, very few people choose to return to an earlier lifestyle. We cope with the present and try to improve it, piece by piece.

In my favorite paragraph, Weyrich and Lind rightly laud the home-schooling movement as an “important act of secession” and refer to “the only safe form of power: power of example.” Substitute “is” for the colon and that phrase belongs in our lexicon right next to Lord Acton’s “power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” On this cultural libertarians and cultural traditionalists can agree.

As long as we are free to choose, I can choose to favor—as I do, with them—small organic farms, mass transportation, and the New Urbanism while at the same time enjoying—as I gather they do not—a multi-ethnic America with Latinos and Asians sharing my neighborhood, workplace, and social life.

We have that freedom to choose—culturally if not politically—to an amazing degree rarely seen in history. Yet very few Americans choose to live a quasi-Amish lifestyle, or even a Russell Kirkean lifestyle with electricity but no television.

In fact, I suspect Weyrich and Lind will find it harder to wean their fellow conservatives from their business-culture lifestyle than from the GOP. Let me give you an example from my personal life that illustrates why I say this.

“Given freedom, very few people choose to return to an earlier lifestyle. We cope with the present and try to improve it, piece by piece.”

While I love world music and African dance, my home base is traditional American music and dance. In particular, you’ll find me contra dancing every Friday. The odds are that you haven’t heard about contra dancing, so let me explain that its initial roots are in England, but by now it’s as American as, well, apple pie. When I’m on a contra line, I’m sharing that line with colonial Vermonters of the Green Mountain Boys era and every generation of Americans before and since. We dance to live music, with New England, Appalachian, and Celtic tunes being the dominant influences. Many of our dance moves are the same as in square dancing, though we are arranged in long lines of couples rather than squares.

This is a quintessential American experience harking back to an earlier era. Live acoustic music, not the DJ- and rock-oriented club scene. No alcohol or drugs—people

come only to dance and socialize. We often share potluck meals or snacks. It’s truly intergenerational, with everyone from grandparents to teens and young children dancing with each other. Dance flirtation is encouraged, but try to go beyond that and you’ll be invited to find a different venue. At a contra dance weekend, everyone adopts the young kids by looking out for them so their parents can dance too. This is a uniquely American cultural community, found in hundreds of towns and cities across the nation.

Why do I bring this up? Because in 15 years of contra dancing and all the conversations I’ve had with the other dancers when we’re not on the floor, I cannot think of one conservative among them. Occasionally one will show up for one or two dances, but they don’t come back. I don’t know why, but from conversations with a few of my conservative friends who know of my strange obsession, I suspect they find it too quaint, too hokey for their tastes. They prefer the more fashionable forms of dance and partying that are popular in the suburbs, the synthesizer over the fiddle, the country club over the Grange hall. Heck, they don’t even know what a Grange hall is. So from my personal experience in social and cultural traditionalism, I’d say Weyrich and Lind have their work cut out for them, culturally perhaps more than politically.

But wait. All this was true in contra dancing until a couple of years ago. Inexplicably and spontaneously, at dances across the country, high-school and college students have discovered this ancient art form and taken to it with all the energy and enthusiasm you’d expect in their age group. Church youth groups are beginning to come together to our dances. And from conversations with the kids, particularly at rural dances outside metropolitan Washington, D.C., I know that a surprising number of them are home schooled. Being outside the cultural mainstream already, they have no problem with a dance form that might be sneered at by the “in” kids at school. And their parents certainly have no problem with the wholesome atmosphere at the dances.

I’m not sure that Weyrich and Lind will ever realize their cultural dreams through an organized movement. Nevertheless, individual by individual, in an apparently non-directed fashion, some people will make the choice for more traditional pursuits over the commercialized consensus. And just possibly, thanks to the dedication of Weyrich and Lind and others, significant numbers of Americans will make the “right” choices. ■

David Franke is co-author with Richard A. Viguerie of America’s Right Turn.

Next Stop: Tehran

The White House denies plans to attack Iran, but the signs all point in that direction.

By Philip Giraldi

BY THE TIME President Bush finally announced it, his surge strategy was old news. But an unexpected section of the speech jarred the normally somnolent mainstream media: “Iran is providing material support for attacks on American troops. We will disrupt the attacks on our forces. ... And we will seek out and destroy the networks providing advanced weaponry and training to our enemies in Iraq.” Speculation that Bush was already plotting his next war nearly stole the story of how he plans to salvage the current one.

Picking up the presidential cue, the administration began advancing the fiction that Iranian support of America’s “enemies” in Iraq is killing U.S. soldiers—an implausible assertion since the insurgents and al-Qaeda are Sunnis, while the Iranians are Shi’ites linked to parties within the current Iraqi government. The day after the speech, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, on her way to the Middle East to pull together a Sunni coalition against Iran, asserted willingness to confront Tehran over its “destabilizing behavior.” And by Jan. 15, the administration’s supposed realist, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, had jumped on the scrum, declaring that Iran has been “very negative,” while admitting for the first time that the naval buildup in the Persian Gulf was designed to threaten Iran and “reassure allies.” White House sources report that the National Security Council has already considered likely consequences of a war with Iran, and an assessment of Tehran’s ability to retaliate concluded

that the resulting damage to American facilities and interests worldwide would be “acceptable.”

White House Press Secretary Tony Snow dismissed as “urban legend” the notion that war preparations are underway. But he persuaded neither a public turned skeptical by the Iraq invasion nor certain congressional Democrats. The Jan. 11 Special Forces raid on the Iranian Consulate in the Kurdish Iraqi city of Irbil, a calculated provocation personally authorized by President Bush and evidently representative of the more muscular new policy, fueled questions about the administration’s intentions. Sen. James Webb asked Secretary Rice, “Is it the position of this administration that it possesses the authority to take unilateral action against Iran in the absence of a direct threat without congressional approval?” She ducked the question. Similarly, on ABC’s “This Week,” National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley would not say whether he agrees with senators who insist that the president needs congressional approval for an attack. Other administration sources assert that Bush believes he could strike Iran in his capacity as commander in chief or under his 2003 Iraq authorization. Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Sen. John D. Rockefeller voiced his alarm: “It’s Iraq again. This whole concept of moving against Iran is bizarre.”

In some sense, the war has already begun. For the past two years, the U.S. has been conducting secret operations inside Iran, employing Special Forces units operating out of Afghanistan,

while Pentagon-supported dissidents have been carrying out armed raids into Iran’s predominantly Arab provinces.

A second carrier group, the *USS John Stennis*, is moving toward the Persian Gulf to supplement the carrier *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower*—the last time two carrier groups were in the Gulf was during the invasion of Iraq—and a flotilla of minesweepers accompanied by an Aegis class cruiser was sent to the region at the end of 2006. The carrier aircraft, useless against insurgents and terrorists in Iraq, can only be employed in a war with Iran, while the minesweepers would be needed to keep clear the Strait of Hormuz for oil tankers and other shipping.

The naval presence in the region will be directed by Adm. William Fallon, the recently appointed chief of Central Command, replacing the uncooperative Gen. John Abizaid, who had opposed the surge. Fallon knows little of ground combat but a great deal about naval air operations. The dearth of “boots on the ground” Army and Marine infantry would be irrelevant in Iran as an assault would be conducted from the sea and air, where the U.S. has more than enough available resources.

Bush has also ordered Patriot missile batteries to the region, clearly intended to defend against Iranian ballistic missiles and airstrikes launched in a retaliatory attack against vulnerable U.S. bases in Iraq and in Kuwait and against the region’s oil fields.

Once the military and naval resources arrive at the end of February, the precise

timing for a strike would depend on political and economic factors, as well as suitable weather conditions permitting aerial and satellite reconnaissance. But maintaining two carrier groups and support vessels in the Persian Gulf is hugely expensive, so the administration will be motivated to use them once all the components for an attack are in place. A Kuwaiti newspaper, relying on confidential sources in the Emirate's government, predicts that the attack will take place before the first week of April, when Tony Blair steps down as British prime minister, under the assumption that he will provide political cover as well as material support in the form of minesweepers. As Kuwait's government, host to the sprawling U.S. base Camp Doha and a prime target for Iranian retaliation, has been in the loop for planning vis-à-vis Iran, the suggested date has a high level of credibility.

As for *casus belli*, an attack might be preceded by a Gulf of Tonkin type incident in which Iran fires on or otherwise interferes with a U.S. warship. As two carrier groups will basically fill the shallow and narrow waters of the Persian Gulf, the potential for an incident is obviously very high.

At least as significant as the military buildup is the intensifying rhetoric surrounding the Iranian threat. President Bush has guaranteed Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert that the U.S. will defend Israel against Iran and will not engage Tehran in negotiations. At the 2006 annual meeting of AIPAC, the principal Israeli lobbying group, Vice President Dick Cheney stated in his keynote address, "We will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon." There have been similar, and frequent, iterations of that theme by Rice, Hadley, former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and, most recently, by the Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns addressing an audience in Israel. Those who hope

that Democrats will stop the rush to war need only note the repeated excoriation of Iran by party leaders like Hillary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, Steny Hoyer, and Charles Schumer. Howard Dean has declared that the U.S. attack on Iraq was directed against the "wrong enemy" while Iran is "the right enemy." Dean's DNC, which reportedly receives more than half of its funds from Jewish sources, would be understandably reluctant to oppose war against Iran.

Former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Deputy Prime Minister Avigdor Lieberman urge an expeditious attack to destroy Iran's nuclear capabilities—arms inspector Scott Ritter has called the drive to attack Iran a policy "made in Israel." And outspoken former Israeli Brigadier General Oded Tira has called on the Israeli lobby to engage Democratic hawks and exploit media connections to bring about action against Iran:

President Bush lacks the political power to attack Iran. As an American strike in Iran is essential for our existence, we must help him pave the way by lobbying the Democratic Party (which is conducting itself foolishly) and U.S. newspaper editors. We need to do this in order to turn the Iranian issue to a bipartisan one and unrelated to the Iraq failure.

Tira joins other advocates of war with Iran in recognizing the power of the mainstream media to prime the public for an attack. Four separate Iran groups working within the U.S. government—and staffed by many of the same individuals who brought about the Iraq War—will likely preface military action against Tehran with a series of leaked stories to latter-day Judith Millers demonizing the designated enemy. As with the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, ideologically driven intelligence centers relying on

dubious sources like the terrorist group Mujahadeen e Khalq have been established at the Pentagon and elsewhere to offer alarmist assessments of Iran.

The propagandizing effort has already begun. A late-2006 series of largely fictional Israeli-generated stories in Rupert Murdoch's *Times* newspapers of London hyped the Iranian threat. Most recently, the *Times* reported that Israel is preparing for its own attack on three key Iranian nuclear facilities. The planning reportedly includes use of nuclear devices to eliminate deeply buried facilities, a refinement to the story added to encourage the United States to attack instead, as the U.S. believes it could take out the targets without using nuclear weapons.

Other indicators suggest that an attack against Iran is impending, if not imminent. Pentagon planners, conscious that if attacked Iran would stir up its Shi'ite friends in neighboring Iraq, anticipate that extra soldiers being used in the surge might be shifted to the Iran-Iraq border to seal it off when military operations against Tehran start. Retired Air Force Col. Sam Gardiner, who taught strategy and military operations at the National War College, believes that combat brigades ostensibly being collected for the surge pacification of Baghdad might instead be sent directly to the border with Iran. The Department of Defense is also reported to be hiring more Farsi speakers to train soldiers in the language—a pointless exercise unless some level of engagement with Iran is anticipated—while Washington contractors providing translation services to the Pentagon are working seven days a week on Farsi documents, seeking the "silver bullet" linking Iran to terrorism, thus making some case for war.

The rejection of the Iraq Study Group's suggestion that the U.S. work diplomatically and constructively with all parties in the Persian Gulf region

provided further evidence of the administration's intentions. Likewise, its refusal to approach the bargaining table until Iran agrees to abandon its nuclear energy program. That program, monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency, exists in response to a legitimate need for electrical generating capacity based on projections that Iran's oil resources will soon sharply diminish and eventually be depleted. An as yet unreleased U.S. National Intelligence Estimate on Iran concludes that the evidence for a weapons program is largely circumstantial and inconclusive, while the Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte reported that Iran is five to ten years away from having a weapon even if it accelerates the process and no one interferes with its development. Negroponte was predictably fired for his unwillingness to alter the intelligence, and the NIE is unlikely to see the light of day unless it is rewritten to conclude that Iran is an immediate threat.

Other attempts to build bridges between Washington and Tehran have also failed. Years of negotiations with Iran by Britain, France, and Germany went nowhere because of American refusal to play a part in the process, which came very close to a comprehensive settlement on a number of occasions. The U.S. instead chose to block agreements that did not include complete Iranian surrender on the key issue of its nuclear program. A series of compromises proposed by Tehran between March 2005 and October 2006 that would have banned nuclear-weapon production and permitted round-the-clock complete-access inspections were rejected due to American objections.

Iran has also reached out directly to the United States to establish a basis for negotiations but has been rebuffed repeatedly by an intransigent White House. In the spring of 2006, confidential

negotiations between Iran and American Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad to help stabilize Iraq were suspended under orders from Vice President Cheney. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's 18-page letter to President Bush in May 2006, widely interpreted in Iran as an attempt to establish dialogue, was summarily rejected. Bush did not even bother to read it. Yet the overtures continued. Former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami's September visit was a backdoor approach for opening discussion. But Rice's State Department only reluctantly permitted the visit, and the White House then ignored it, failing to grasp the extended olive branch. It is the ultimate irony that the Iraqi government, which the U.S. is ostensibly protecting,

is regularly meeting Iranian leaders to establish a *modus vivendi*, while Washington refuses to engage.

Iran is not an imminent threat and clearly doesn't want war, while the United States can ill afford another. But the Bush administration seems intent on toppling Ahmadinejad. The overwhelming victory of moderates and reformers in Iran's December election shows that the Iranian people are peacefully working toward the same end. But the White House, showing interest neither in dialogue nor in letting the democratic process do its work, seems more inclined to let bombs do the talking. ■

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Making Enemies

How Israel helped to create Hamas

By Brendan O'Neill

IN THE BLOODY STREET struggle between Hamas and Fatah for control of the Palestinian territories—a civil war in all but name—Israel is firmly pinning its hopes on a Fatah victory. It sees its old enemies in Fatah as far preferable to Hamas, which refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist and whose members still occasionally blow themselves up on streets and buses inside the Jewish state.

Fatah has been a thorn in Israel's side for over 40 years. It is the largest group in the Palestine Liberation Organization, and its name is a reverse acronym of the Arabic title Harakat al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Filastini, which literally translates

"Palestinian National Liberation Movement." But Israel is ready to overlook all that and is making moves toward its old secular, nationalist opponents—"Arafat's men"—in an attempt to isolate what it sees as the cosmically minded religious extremists of Hamas.

When British Prime Minister Tony Blair publicly supported Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas in December and promised to donate £13 million to Fatah, he won the fulsome praise of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who thanked Blair for his "good and interesting ideas" and agreed that it is time for "moderate [Palestinian] elements to be strengthened." To this end, Olmert

hinted that more than \$700 million in tax receipts currently being withheld from the Palestinian Authority on the grounds that the money might end up in the coffers of Hamas could be released if a friendlier Fatah-led government were in control. This was seen by many as Israel giving the green light to Fatah to continue facing down Hamas. According to the military wing of Hamas, Fatah has even passed details of Hamas's "military projects" to Israel so that Israeli forces can more efficiently deal with Hamas militants.

But there is something bitterly ironic in Israel's support for Fatah against Hamas—and it should be a lesson to governments everywhere that meddle in other states' affairs. In the past, Israel supported Hamas against Fatah. Indeed, in the 1970s and 80s, Israel played a not insignificant role in encouraging

Hamas first emerged in 1987. It was formed from various charities based in the Palestinian territories with links to the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamist movement born in Egypt in the 1920s from which many of today's radical Islamic sects, including al-Qaeda, have sprung. Israel allowed these Islamic charities to gain strength and influence in Palestinian areas, hoping that they would counter the influence of secular Palestinian resistance movements. Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas until his death by Israeli air strike in 2004, formed Hamas as the military wing of his group the Islamic Association, which was licensed by Israel 10 years earlier. During that period, when there was open conflict between Israeli forces and Palestinian nationalists, Israeli officials gave the nod to and even indirectly funded the

Israel was much more lenient, even permissive in its attitude towards the Islamists. One of the first actions taken by Israel after its victory in the 1967 war was to release from prison various Muslim Brotherhood activists, including Ahmed Yassin, future founder of Hamas. Yassin and others had been jailed by the Egyptian authorities after the Muslim Brotherhood tried to assassinate Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, the anti-colonialist and pan-Arabist who considered political Islam a threat and an anachronism and was fairly unforgiving in his treatment of its practitioners. Israel, by contrast, sensing that such radical Islamists might be helpful in undermining Arab nationalists like the Nasser-influenced Fatah in the Palestinian territories released the Islamists from their cells and encouraged them to take root in Palestinian society.

According to Robert Dreyfuss, author of the enlightening and exhaustive book *Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam*, political Islamism grew exponentially as Israel took control of the Palestinian territories:

Starting in 1967, the Israelis began to encourage or allow the Islamists in the Gaza and West Bank areas, among the Palestinian exiled population, to flourish. The statistics are really quite staggering. In Gaza, for instance, between 1967 and 1987, when Hamas was founded, the number of mosques tripled from 200 to 600. And a lot of that come with money flowing from outside Gaza, from wealthy conservative Islamists in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. But, of course, none of this could have happened without the Israelis casting an approving eye upon it.

It is from these Islamist roots that Hamas emerged in 1987. Dreyfuss continues

LIKE AMERICA AND BRITAIN BEFORE IT, ISRAEL IS LEARNING THE HARD WAY THAT IT IS ONE THING TO **LET RADICAL ISLAMISTS OFF THE LEASH** BUT QUITE ANOTHER THING TO **REIN THEM BACK IN**.

Hamas's emergence in the belief that such an Islamist group might help rupture support for the mass nationalist movement of Fatah. Twenty years later, Israel has switched sides, hoping that it can encourage Fatah to see off Hamas. It wants "moderate" Palestinians to take on the "extremist" Palestinians it helped create. Like America and Britain before it—both of whom have supported and armed Islamist movements in the Middle East in attempts to undermine secular nationalist parties—Israel is learning the hard way that it is one thing to let radical Islamists off the leash but quite another thing to rein them back in again. If you make monsters, you shouldn't be surprised if they come back to bite you.

establishment of Islamic societies in the West Bank and Gaza that might weaken the Palestine Liberation Organization. Martha Kessler, a senior analyst for the CIA, has said, "[W]e saw Israel cultivate Islam as a counterweight to Palestinian nationalism." The very Islamic groups "cultivated" by Israel in the 1970s became Hamas in the 1980s, which went on to become Israel's biggest nightmare in the 1990s. It remains so today.

After the Six Day War of 1967, Israel began administering the West Bank, Gaza, and the Sinai Peninsula. Where the Arab nationalist forces that had previously controlled these areas were hard on Islamist activists, rightly judging them to be enemies of secular nationalism,

There's plenty of evidence that the Israeli intelligence services, especially Shin Bet and the military occupation authorities, encouraged the growth of the Muslim Brotherhood and the founding of Hamas [in Palestinian territories].

Indeed, according to former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Charles Freeman, Shin Bet—the Israeli counter-intelligence and internal security service—knowingly created Hamas: “Israel started Hamas. It was a project of Shin Bet, which had a feeling that they could use it to hem in the PLO.”

A former senior CIA official recently told UPI that Israel's duplicitous support for the Islamist groups that subsequently became Hamas was “a direct attempt to divide and dilute support for a strong, secular PLO by using a competing religious alternative.” Dreyfuss agrees, pointing out how useful it was for Israel that an Islamist movement in the Palestinian territories antagonized, in some cases violently, the mass Fatah outfit:

The Hamas organization was a bitter opponent of Palestinian nationalism and clashed repeatedly with the PLO and with Fatah, of course. And there were armed clashes on university campuses in the 1970s and 1980s, where Hamas would attack the PLO, the PFLP [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine], the PDFLP [Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine], and other groups, with clubs and chains. This was before guns became prominent in the Occupied Territories.

In allowing the emergence of radical Islamism, Israel was following in the footsteps of successive British and American governments and their policy of “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” Indeed, the Muslim Brotherhood itself, midwife to Hamas, is a creation of British

colonialism. In the 1920s, the British, then the colonial rulers of Egypt, helped set up the Muslim Brotherhood as a means of keeping Egyptian nationalism and anti-colonialism in check. Dreyfuss describes the original Muslim Brotherhood as an “unabashed British intelligence front.” The mosque that served as the first headquarters of the Brotherhood, in Ismailia, Egypt, was built by the (British) Suez Canal Company. In the 1930s and 1950s, with Britain's knowledge and tacit approval, the Brotherhood both challenged anti-colonial parties within Egypt and spread to other parts of the Near

radicalized by the Muslim Brotherhood before moving on to the more radical Islamic Jihad group in 1979 and subsequently fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan. Indeed, in both intellectual and physical terms, al-Qaeda has benefited from Western intervention in Middle Eastern affairs. It takes its intellectual inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood, that group supported by both American and British intelligence in the early and middle 20th century, and it was physically forged in the heat of the Afghan-Soviet War, a conflict largely facilitated by American, British, and

FROM EGYPT TO PALESTINE TO AFGHANISTAN, THE **EXPLICIT AIM OF WESTERN AND ISRAELI SUPPORT FOR RADICAL ISLAMISM** HAS BEEN TO ISOLATE, WEAKEN, AND ULTIMATELY **DESTROY POPULAR POLITICAL MOVEMENTS.**

and Middle East, setting up branches in Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, where under the “approving eye” of Israel from the late 1960s to the 1980s, it eventually mutated into Hamas. Following Gamal Abdel Nasser's rise to power in 1954, both the British and Americans viewed the Brotherhood as a useful weapon against secular nationalism and communism. In his book *Sleeping With the Devil*, former CIA officer Robert Baer describes the “dirty little secret” in Washington in the early 1950s, namely that “the White House looked on the Brothers as a silent ally, a secret weapon against—what else?—communism.”

Al-Qaeda itself, that most radical and obscure of Islamic sects, springs from the Muslim Brotherhood. Osama bin Laden is heavily influenced by the thinking of Sayyid Qutb, a radical member of the Brotherhood. The Egyptian Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Laden's second-in-command and currently the public face of al-Qaeda in its occasional grainy videos and crackly audio recordings, was first

Saudi support for the Mujahideen.

In playing the same game as the Brits and Americans—the “devil's game”—Israel created its own gravediggers. Israel's encouragement of Hamas's emergence to counter secular nationalism represented an attack on the idea of popular and secular democracy, so it is not surprising that Hamas retains its somewhat extreme religious leanings and suspicion of traditional politics.

From Egypt to Palestine to Afghanistan, the explicit aim of Western and Israeli support for radical Islamism has been to isolate, weaken, and ultimately destroy popular political movements that very often were based on Western ideas of democracy and progress. Israel is now trying to rein in the consequences of its earlier actions by encouraging Fatah to take on Hamas, which is a recipe for further conflict and division in the Palestinian territories. ■

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Terrorists Chip In

Implanting radio ID tags in U.S. passports makes stealing personal data easier than ever.

By William Norman Grigg

INFORMATION-SECURITY expert Lukas Grunwald is not reluctant to share his opinion of the radio frequency identification (RFID) technology that is now a mandatory security feature of American passports.

"This whole design is totally brain damaged," Grunwald told *Wired* magazine. "From my point of view all of these RFID passports are a huge waste of money. They're not increasing security at all."

RFID chips or tags are tiny data storage units, generally the size of a grain of rice, equipped with radio transmitters. The new "e-passports" issued by the U.S. government have a passive RFID chip embedded in the back containing personal information, including a digitized photograph and, in the future, a fingerprint. The chip is activated by passing it in front of a reading mechanism that transmits the appropriate radio signal.

Under a U.S. law passed in 2002, the 27 countries participating in the Visa Waiver Program—most of them European—are required to install RFID chips in their passports. U.S. citizens returning from abroad must now present a passport to customs officers, and since Jan. 1, 2007, the U.S. government has issued e-passports to Americans renewing travel documents or obtaining them for the first time. The State Department insists that the new digitized passports are more secure. Experts like Lukas Grunwald strongly beg to differ.

During last August's Black Hat security conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, Grunwald, a consultant with DN-Systems Enterprise Solutions in Germany, demonstrated the ease with which the

RFID-enhanced e-passports can be hacked and cloned. Along with an associate named Christian Bottger, Grunwald developed a cloning program that can duplicate an e-passport's digital information in roughly five minutes using an RFID reader he purchased on eBay. The cloned passport chip is completely indistinguishable from the genuine article.

Grunwald was neither the first nor the only techie to expose the vulnerabilities of e-passports. In January 2006, the Dutch security firm Riscure conducted a similar experiment for "Nieuwslicht," a television news program in the Netherlands. Using a personal computer and a commercially available radio receiver, Riscure was able to read the digital information of a prototype Dutch e-passport (which uses the same RFID chip and encryption scheme as the new U.S. passports) from a distance of about 30 centimeters. With that information, Riscure cracked the e-passport's password in roughly two hours and thus gained full access to the RFID chip's contents, including a digital picture, fingerprint, and other personal information.

"Nearly every country issuing this passport has a few security experts who are yelling out ... 'This is not secure,'" Grunwald points out. "This is not a good idea to use this technology." British computer security expert Adam Laurie of Bunker Secure Hosting expresses that view in more colorful terms, comparing the supposedly ultra-secure e-passport system to "installing a solid steel front door to your house and then putting the key under the mat."

Laurie himself has rigged a device that can swipe an e-passport's information from a distance of slightly less than eight centimeters. That distance is "enough if your target subject is sitting next to you on the London Underground or crushed up against you on the Gatwick Airport monorail, his pocketed passport next to the reader you have hidden in a bag," writes Steven Boggan of London's *Guardian*.

A technical study performed in 2005 demonstrated that it's possible to eavesdrop on an RFID passport from greater distances. Using an electronic "leech," researchers were able to read personal data from about 50 centimeters and then relay it to a second device called a "ghost" up to 50 meters away. A relay system of this sort in a crowded travel node—an airport, bus station, or subway—would make it possible for information thieves to harvest countless digital profiles from e-passports.

What use could be made of a cloned e-passport? Wouldn't it be easier to simply steal a physical passport, as defenders of the new system maintain?

According to Grunwald, the biometric features that supposedly make the RFID-enhanced passport more secure may actually benefit terrorists, smugglers, and others in the market for phony travel documents, in large part because those features make stealing physical passports unnecessary.

Although a cloned chip cannot be altered to add new biometric information, such as a new fingerprint, Grunwald contends that there are "established ways of making forged fingerprints" that

can fool automated security systems. And electronically stored photographs would pose only minor obstacles to terrorists. As the *Guardian's* Steve Boggan points out, "if a terrorist bore a slight resemblance to you—and grew a beard, perhaps—he would have a good chance of getting through a border. Because his chip is cloned, with the necessary digital signatures, and because you have not reported your passport stolen—you still have it!—his machine-readable travel document will get him wherever he wants to go, using your identity."

The potential usefulness of e-passports to terrorists goes well beyond merely making identity theft easier. Some privacy advocates and business groups are concerned that the new U.S. passports will leave Americans more vulnerable to violent crime abroad—from petty theft to kidnapping to murder.

The Business Travel Coalition worries that the RFID-equipped passports "will put American business travelers at risk of identity theft and physical harm." Greeley Koch, president of the Association of Corporate Travel Executives, seconds that criticism. "The thought that your travel documents could be broadcasting your nationality to those with an interest in harming U.S. citizens is bad enough," states Koch. "But it could also be pinpointing likely targets for pickpockets, thieves, and even providing information to steal."

In a paper submitted to the State Department two years ago, information security experts Ari Jules, David Molnar, and David Wagner describe some terrifying potential uses for stolen e-passport data. One possibility is that captured data would "enable the construction of 'American-sniffing' bombs, since U.S. e-passports [do] not use encryption to protect confidentiality of data." Another "unpleasant prospect," as the authors put it, is the advent of an "RFID-enabled bomb," an explosive device that is keyed

to explode at [a] particular individual's RFID reading."

In an April 4, 2005 submission to the State Department's Office of Passport Policy, representatives of six privacy and cyber-security advocacy groups protested that "the proposed RFID passport unjustifiably endangers passport holders' privacy and creates substantial security and other problems." They also pointed out that the State Department had no statutory authority to issue the e-passport. The Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002 mandates that the countries participating in the Visa Waiver Program upgrade their passports with RFID technology, but as the State Department admits, "the United States is not mandated to comply" with that provision.

So in addition to making American citizens and their travel documents less secure, the e-passport program is technically illegal. Why did Washington make the program's creation such an urgent priority? At least part of the answer is corrupt corporatist profiteering.

The watchdog group Consumers Against Supermarket Privacy Invasion and Numbering (CASPIAN) obtained a December 2004 memo from the General Services Administration urging federal agency heads to engage in something akin to what the film industry calls "product placement" advertising on behalf of RFID technology.

The GSA, which administers federal procurement policies, instructed agency heads "to consider action that can be taken to advance the [RFID] industry by demonstrating the long-term intent of the agency to adopt RFID technological solutions. ... [A]gencies need to determine how to best implement RFID technology on current or proposed contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements."

Since that time, notes CASPIAN, "major RFID initiatives have been publicized by a number of government agencies, including Social Security, NASA,

the Postal Service, and the Department of Homeland Security, among others." "Buying needed equipment is one thing," observes CASPIAN founder Katherine Albrecht, co-author of the RFID exposé *Spychips*. "Finding excuses to purchase and promote controversial technology at taxpayer expense is another."

Former Homeland Security Czar Tom Ridge embodies the nexus between the growing RFID industry and the thriving federal Homeland Security apparatus. In April 2005, Ridge joined the board of directors at Savi Technology, a Silicon Valley RFID firm. A few months later, Tommy Thompson, who had been George W. Bush's first-term Secretary of Health and Human Services, joined the board of Applied Digital, which manufactures human-implantable "VeriChip" RFID tags containing medical information and other personal data. Thompson did his part to promote the technology by "getting chipped" in his arm.

In countries like Mexico and Brazil, where kidnapping is rampant, thousands of people have been chipped as a personal security measure. Colombian President Alvaro Uribe, among others, has suggested that laborers migrating to the United States for seasonal work should be implanted with microchips, a suggestion that found favor with some immigration reformers on Capitol Hill. Two years ago, Brittain Elementary School in Sutter, California, mandated that all its students carry an RFID tag.

All of these developments and proposals may herald an era of what the *Scientific American* calls "Human Inventory Control," an inescapable worldwide system of digital surveillance and pervasive personal insecurity. The architects of that system are already positioning themselves to cash in. ■

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Feeding the Guerillas

Combating Iraq's militias means declaring war on the communities they govern.

By Martin Sieff

THINK 20,000 more American troops in Baghdad will make Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army and the other Iraqi militias roll over and say uncle? Think again.

The Bush administration's policymaking in Iraq remains where it has always been—at least three years behind what is actually happening on the ground. Gen. Dave Petraeus is being sent out as the new U.S. ground forces commander. Middle and junior level U.S. Army and Marine officers are eagerly snapping up copies of the just republished paperback version of Sir Alistair Horne's *A Savage War of Peace*, his classic account of the Algerian War of Independence against France. (Let us here pause to note that Paul Wolfowitz, in testimony before a congressional committee, referred to it as a war against Spanish colonial occupation. He couldn't even get that right.) None of this will make the slightest bit of difference.

U.S. policymakers are finally paying lip service to the idea that the Sunni insurgents in Iraq are indeed waging a full-scale guerrilla war against American forces. The trouble is that this conception of the Iraq conflict has been obsolete ever since Sunni insurgents bombed the al-Askariya Mosque in Samara on Feb. 22, 2006. Shi'ite militias across Iraq, and especially in Baghdad, responded with a savage wave of random killings in reprisal. That was the key moment when the Iraq conflict metastasized into a sectarian civil war between the entire Sunni and Shi'ite communities.

It is not even a "clean" or simple civil war, for it involves conflicts between rival warring militias within each com-

munity. Yet none of the 1,500 overpaid civilian analysts in the U.S. Department of Defense have yet awakened to this truth: paramilitary militias in both communities provide the only effective government in Iraq. The Rube Goldberg constitutional machinery that the Bush administration so lovingly labored over to produce free and fair elections, an independent parliament, and then a Shi'ite-dominated government, has failed to provide reliable basic services or security. The new Iraqi army and police are thoroughly penetrated by the Shi'ite militias, and every Iraqi knows it. The more U.S. forces come into conflict with the Shi'ite militias in Baghdad, the more they run the risk that the guns they provide to the new Iraqi army and police will be turned on them, at first in increasingly common "random incidents" and eventually in a general uprising.

The British had to deal with three general and very popular uprisings of the Iraqi army—in 1936, 1941, and 1958. And they had spent decades ensuring its loyalty and dependability. This is what makes the "three-to-one" formula—putting three Iraqi army battalions into Baghdad for every single American battalion backstopping them—that Rep. Duncan Hunter, the former Republican chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, continues to push on the Bush administration so unconnected to reality. The Iraqi army is fated to eventually turn its guns on the troops that empowered it.

But suppose this grim scenario does not come to pass. Surely the overwhelming firepower of the five existing American combat brigades in Baghdad and the

"surge" so touted by President Bush, combined with an avid reading by U.S. combat officers of Horne's classic text on Algeria will bring Baghdad to heel?

Alas no. First, champions of the Algiers-Baghdad analogy neglect to note that the entire population of Algiers in 1956 was only half a million. It doubled to a million by 1960. The Casbah that was the heart of the FLN guerrilla forces before they were tactically smashed in the 1958 Battle of Algiers was less than 100,000. But the total population of Baghdad today is 7 million with 2 million of those living in the Shi'ite-dominated working-class district of Sadr City alone. And the U.S. Armed Forces, thanks to the political pusillanimity of President Bush and the romantic fantasies of former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his neocon "experts" that they could wage sci-fi super-war on the manpower cheap does not have the half million conscript soldiers that the French Fourth Republic, determined to hold on to Algeria, flooded into that unhappy country. Adding an extra 20,000 troops to make the difference in pacifying a city of 7 million is a drop in the ocean—or, perhaps more aptly, a spoonful of sand in the Arabian Desert.

Neither the U.S. Armed Forces nor the ramshackle Iraqi parliamentary-democratic system that American authorities have imposed on Iraq have brought peace, prosperity, security, or basic daily services to the Iraqi capital. For these, the people of Baghdad, especially the ever-growing Shi'ite majority, have come to rely on their neighborhood militias, which have become the

real government of the Iraqi capital. "Beirut Rules" or "Belfast Rules" now operate in the city of Baghdad.

In Belfast from 1969 through 1994 and in Beirut from 1975 through 1991, the professional armies of major states never made the mistake of thinking they could totally annihilate the guerrilla/paramilitary forces operating in the country.

Belfast had always been a British city, so the British army was never an army of military occupation. The guerrilla insurgency of the Irish Republican Army came only from a small minority of the Catholic community of Northern Ireland, which itself was only one-third of the total population. The British army managed to tame the IRA only by waging relatively limited military operations against it and putting its main emphasis on intelligence and diplomatic/political dialogue with the political wing of Sinn Féin.

The Syrian Army in Beirut was far more of an outside, foreign presence than the British army in Northern Ireland ever was. Yet for all their famed ruthlessness, after their initial entry into Lebanon in the mid-1970s, the Syrians never made the mistake of trying to wage a direct war of annihilation against any of the most powerful sectarian militias.

The reason for this was that in both cases the militia forces were deeply rooted in their own local community strongholds and were seen by a significant plurality—and often a majority—of their inhabitants as the community's defenders. War against them was therefore seen as war against the entire community. The more force that was used by outsiders against militia forces and the more civilian casualties incurred, the more the remaining civilians, especially the families and friends of the dead and injured, would be motivated to rally to the militias' cause.

That is the nightmare scenario that the U.S. Armed Forces could face if they

are forced to fight a campaign of annihilation or repression against the dominant Shi'ite militias that increasingly control the city of Baghdad.

The idea is for the American military to act in a supportive role in partnership with the Iraqi police and army, which would be operating on behalf of the democratically elected Iraqi government. But the reality would be far different. The Iraqi armed forces and police remain highly unreliable. Lt. Gen. Martin Dempsey, the commander of the U.S. military's effort to train Iraqi forces, publicly admitted on Dec. 18 that as many as 25 percent of the senior commanders of the Iraqi police had significant ties to the Shi'ite militias.

The more U.S. firepower and military force used against the militias, and the more civilian casualties inflicted as a by-product of military operations, the more the Shi'ite population of Baghdad would become bitterly opposed to America's presence. As the conflict escalated, U.S. forces would become embattled and besieged. The Iraqi government—a government in little more than name—at best would try to help ineffectually and at worst could easily become a conduit for intelligence and sabotage on behalf of the Shi'ite militias.

The U.S. Army historically has had little experience with the complexities, viciousness, and enormous casualties of full-scale street-fighting in urban environments. Horne's great book is no guide to that kind of experience nor does it pretend to be. Horrific as the Algerian War of Independence and its Battle for Algiers were, they were not remotely on that scale.

That is because the tactical doctrine of street fighting in cities is one of the most difficult to master in modern war, and it requires far more expertise than the overwhelming firepower that the U.S. Marines and other combat forces poured into Fallujah and other Iraqi

towns and Baghdadi districts whenever they felt they had to take them. The German Sixth Army and Fourth Panzer Army at Stalingrad were 300,000 strong, more than double the current total U.S. troop strength for the whole of Iraq. They outnumbered the combat troops of Red Army Gen. Vassili Chuikov's 62nd Army by factors of four or five to one. And their use of firepower was unrestrained, to put it mildly: an estimated half a million Russian civilians died in the great siege. Yet it was the Wehrmacht forces that were outfought, decimated, and eventually annihilated. For the previously invincible Wehrmacht had no operational doctrine for street fighting in large cities, and Chuikov was the world's leading expert on the subject. He had played a major role in successfully defending Madrid for the forces of the Spanish Republic in 1936.

The U.S. Army today has no effective systematic doctrine for the capture, pacification, and holding of entire cities either. Rumsfeld, his Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz and their Undersecretary for Policy Douglas Feith did not think the subject was important enough to warrant their attention during their fateful stewardship of the Armed Forces of the United States.

As the Battle of Baghdad escalates in the coming months, the book *American combat officers will find most timely to read for useful and accurate historical analogies will no longer be *Savage War of Peace* but another recent classic of military history by another British historian of renown: *Stalingrad: The Fateful Siege: 1942-43* by Anthony Beevor.* ■

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Iraq and a Hard Place

Congressional Democrats have the power to defund the war, but they don't want to risk ending it before 2008.

By W. James Antle III

WHEN THE CLINTONS first came to Washington, the Democratic Party's unofficial theme song was Fleetwood Mac's "Don't Stop (Thinking About Tomorrow)." Today the Rolling Stones' "You Can't Always Get What You Want" might be a better choice. That's the message coming through loud and clear to millions of voters who cast Democratic ballots last November with hopes of ending the Iraq War.

Democrats now control both houses of Congress, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's "100 hours" legislative marathon has come to a close. President Bush is nevertheless sending an additional 21,500 troops to Iraq, and talk is turning to Tehran, almost as if the new majority did not exist. Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid promptly sent Bush a letter announcing their opposition to the surge and calling instead for redeployment. A non-binding resolution opposing the troop increase is wending its way through the Senate as we go to press.

Can't the Democrats do more than send the president a message? As it happens, the Constitution not only gives Congress the authority to declare war but also the "power of the purse"—the ability to raise or deny funds for any military operation. Congressman Dennis Kucinich, an Ohio Democrat and long-shot presidential candidate, has been challenging his colleagues to use this power. "It is simply not credible to maintain that one opposes the war, yet continues to fund it," he said recently. "If

you oppose the war, then don't vote to fund it."

But virtually nobody expects that the Democrats will actually defund the war, which is precisely why many hawks are challenging them to do so. *Weekly Standard* editor William Kristol described Kucinich's statement as "logical," listing him as an "honorable exception" to the "boneless wonders" who dominate Congress. The House Republican leadership is backing a resolution that would force Democrats to take a stand on funding for both Afghanistan and Iraq. Sen. John Cornyn, a Texas Republican who backs the surge argued, "If my Democrat colleagues are truly opposed to the mission in Iraq, then as the new majority they should schedule a serious debate and a vote on cutting off funding for our troops."

The last three words of Cornyn's volley—"for our troops"—are exactly what gives some Democrats pause. Both Reid and Pelosi have been careful to emphasize that they won't curtail funding to troops in the field. The more forces the Pentagon has in place, the more reluctant Congress will be to do anything that can be seen as detracting from their mission. Lawrence Korb of the Center for American Progress warned the liberal *New Standard*, "By the time you vote on the money bill, a lot of the troops will already be there."

Korb's prediction may already be coming to pass. National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley told ABC's

"This Week" that the administration believes it already had enough money for extra troops in the fiscal year 2007 budget. "I fully understand [Congress] could try to stop me from doing it," Bush told CBS's "60 Minutes," "But I made my decision, and we're going forward."

Such bluster hasn't kept a few powerful Democrats from introducing bills aimed at curbing the troop escalation. Sen. Ted Kennedy filed legislation prohibiting Bush from spending money for additional troops "unless and until Congress approves the president's plan," an approach similar to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974, which essentially ended American involvement in Vietnam, and the Boland Amendment, which barred President Reagan from continuing aid to the Contras. But the Kennedy bill leaves intact funding for troops that have already been sent to Iraq.

Congressman John Murtha, chairman of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, has proposed another approach. He wants to try imposing strict military readiness standards on emergency appropriations. This is intended to have the effect of making the escalation more difficult for the Bush administration while putting the Democrats on record in support of a stronger military in general. Yet this would not necessarily pull the plug on the president's plan.

Senate Democrats entertaining presidential ambitions have been playing a transparent game of Iraq one-upman-

ship reminiscent of the leap-year conservatism contest between then Sens. Bob Dole and Phil Gramm during the 1996 GOP White House sweepstakes. Sen. Hillary Clinton, the Democratic frontrunner, has proposed capping U.S. troop levels at 130,000, along the same lines as legislation that limited U.S. involvement in Lebanon in the 1980s. Her bill would also set benchmarks for the Iraqi government to meet during the next six months.

Aides to Sen. Chris Dodd quickly cried foul, telling the *New York Times* that Clinton copied the cap idea from their boss's bill. Dodd is currently exploring a presidential bid. Another 2008 contender, Sen. Barack Obama, promised to introduce his own bill calling for a phased withdrawal from Iraq, taking a step Clinton opposes.

So far, Sen. Joe Biden, the new chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is the only Democrat to sponsor an anti-escalation bill that actually has Republican backing. Sen. Chuck Hagel, a Nebraska Republican reportedly mulling his own presidential bid, helped draft it. Sen. Susan Collins, a moderate Republican from Maine, has also signed on. Unlike the bills proposed by Biden's Democratic rivals, however, this measure is non-binding—which is why it stands the best chance of passing.

Meanwhile, bills that would defund the war entirely languish with little support. The list of co-sponsors for the more far-reaching legislation is usually limited to the most liberal Democrats in the House and an even smaller group of renegade Republicans like Texas Congressman Ron Paul. A congressional website lists no co-sponsors for Georgia Democrat Sam Farr's House resolution repealing the 2002 authorization of force. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer is reluctant even to endorse Pelosi's call for withholding funds for

the surge. And all of the bills, from the most radical to the more symbolic, face one insurmountable obstacle—a presidential veto that Democrats don't have the votes to override.

"The Democratic leaders of the House and Senate, who are now in control of Congress, have repeatedly said they are going to press Bush to devise a withdrawal plan, not *force* him to do so," *Nation* Washington editor David Corn concluded on the website TomPaine.com. "That is, they have no intention of defunding the war."

Extricating our troops from Iraq legislatively is no easy task. The appropriations process is a blunt instrument. Day-to-day war fighting is generally considered to be a responsibility of the president as commander in chief. This means that Congress has to carefully tailor its spending to push the executive branch toward its policy goals without depriving the troops of needed resources. That would entail cutting war spending to prompt the president to reduce troop levels accordingly, something legislators are usually reluctant to do. Even many of Bush's harshest critics on Capitol Hill agree with Dick Cheney that "war is not run by committee."

While the constitutional power to cut Iraq funding is clearly there, past precedents are of only limited use. The Boland Amendment applied to foreign fighters, not American soldiers. By the time Congress passed the Foreign Assistance Act over President Ford's veto in 1974, major U.S. combat operations in Vietnam had already ended.

Perhaps more importantly, the Democrats who defunded the war were blamed for the ensuing carnage in Southeast Asia. Even though they had turned against a deeply unpopular military intervention, the party later suffered at the ballot box for the dovish reputation it acquired during the later years of the Vietnam debate. The Ameri-

can public didn't like the image of helicopters fleeing the embassy in Saigon any better than reports of casualties from the conflict. Democrats lost three of the next four presidential elections, a history that party members don't want to repeat.

Indeed, the more prudent course politically would be for the Democrats to have the war to campaign against in 2008. Iraq is perhaps the biggest political liability for the two Republican frontrunners, former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Sen. John McCain, who both poll well far outside the red states. A polarizing figure like Hillary Clinton can hardly afford to lose so powerful a club to wield against broadly popular opponents.

Despite Vietnam-era pushback in the form of the War Powers Act of 1973, congressional leaders have frequently been content to let the president act first and then assess the politics later. Those who have spoken out too soon have paid the price. Democrats who voted against the Persian Gulf War in 1990 saw their presidential aspirations go up in smoke, prompting John Kerry, John Edwards, and Hillary Clinton to make a different choice in 2002—one they now regret, since the second war against Iraq has proved less successful and popular than the first.

Yet given the fact Bush has the votes to sustain a veto, making any Democratic action purely symbolic for now, why not make a stronger statement in support of the party's antiwar base? The legal mechanisms exist, but the party, ostensibly divided by competing ideologies and ambitions, may lack the political will to do so. Perhaps the voters who trusted them in 2006 should have a theme song of their own: "Won't Get Fooled Again." ■

W. James Antle III is associate editor of *The American Spectator*.

Appealing Dissent

Rejecting the radicalism of the Vietnam era, veterans of the Iraq War make unlikely but effective protesters.

By Michael Brendan Dougherty

CONGRESSMEN LEAP out of cabs along Independence Avenue, some preparing to conduct business for the first time as the people's representatives. But before they even get in the door, there is a message waiting for them—and it is being delivered by a Marine.

Even out of uniform, Sgt. Liam Madden looks every bit the dutiful jarhead. His dark hair is cut short, his posture stiff and composed, his square jaw barely moves when he speaks. Even in the blistering cold, while reporters look for shelter from the wind, Sgt. Madden's arms stay at his sides. Dozens of microphones form a media bouquet on the podium, leaving no place for him to rest his notes before he speaks. Facing the television cameras that frame his stern face against the Capitol dome, Madden's bearing says that he is on a mission. In his hands he holds a message for Congress. The communication reads

As a patriotic American proud to serve the nation in uniform, I respectfully urge my political leaders in Congress to support the prompt withdrawal of all American military forces and bases from Iraq. Staying in Iraq will not work and is not worth the price. It is time for U.S. troops to come home.

Simple, devoid of radicalism, and most important to Madden, legal. This Appeal for Redress to End the War in Iraq has been signed by over 1,100 members of the Armed Forces, including 100 officers. Delivering it to Congress after

the Martin Luther King holiday, Sergeant Madden isn't nervous. But he never expected to be doing this.

Out of high school in Bellows Falls, Vermont, Madden could not see himself succeeding in college. Like many young men he longed for "structure and direction." He wanted to challenge himself. The military could provide him a way into maturity and, when he was ready, the means for a college education. Enlisting in the fall of 2002, he thought he would serve in Afghanistan. He wasn't afraid: "I was willing to take the risk. ... I wanted to go." Despite his aversion to working with computers, he specialized in communications. "I signed an open contract. Whatever the Corps needs, I'll do."

Madden's journey from dutiful Marine to citizen protestor wasn't typical. His skepticism about the war in Iraq was immediate, but his sense of duty overwhelmed his doubts. He arrived in Al Anbar province in the fall of 2004. He kept telling himself, "I am not doing this for the war, I'm doing it for my fellow Marines. It's not fair to them if I don't do my utmost and do it with pride." His sympathy for the overworked infantry moved him to volunteer his free time filling in for exhausted Marines on patrol. Except when speaking with peers in his rank, Madden kept his doubts quiet. His seven-month tour helped confirm his belief that America's presence was not making Iraq safer.

On leave from Quantico in June 2006, Sergeant Madden went to Norfolk, Virginia to visit friends. It was a summer

Friday night, and the plan was to find a bar and forget the troubles of military life. Instead, his friends dragged him to a screening of the antiwar documentary "Sir! No Sir!" at the YMCA, hosted by Professor David Cortright and Navy Seaman Jonathan Hutto. It was the tense encounter of these three men that set the appeal into motion.

Cortright looks like an Irish priest from the movies, his white hair parted to the side over a bright red face and an easy smile. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1968 and completed his service in 1971. He now teaches Peace Studies at Notre Dame, and when he isn't in class or writing, he is a leading peace activist. It was Cortright's 1975 book *Soldiers in Revolt: GI Resistance During the Vietnam War* that inspired Hutto to invite him to Norfolk. In it, Cortright documents the widespread dissent within the U.S. military that led to combat refusals and open mutiny. He argues that this resistance, accompanied by the protests of Vietnam veterans, was crucial to changing public opinion about the war and ending U.S. involvement in Indochina.

Many active-duty military who went to the Norfolk event were "electrified" by Cortright, Madden would later report. He was not. Ever the skeptic, he protested during the question-and-answer period: "Vietnam had a conscripted force. We volunteered for this." He reasoned that there is now no huge movement in the streets and college campuses like the 60s, and besides, most personnel love the service.

Unsatisfied by the answers he received, Madden began to leave, but Hutto buttonholed him: "We have to talk about this." There was only one argument Madden found convincing after all: "We can't just do nothing."

Although they felt some affinity for the Vietnam veterans Cortright touted as models of resistance, Hutto and Madden wanted a legal outlet for their dissent. It would be impossible to appeal to a broad part of the military otherwise.

Hutto began studying "the regs." He found that under the Military Whistleblower Protection Act, service members are free to make protected communication to a member of Congress. Military personnel can even demonstrate against a war as long as they are off base, off duty, and out of uniform.

Madden still had concerns. Even if soldiers and Marines are protected from reprisals under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, what about informal punishments—tough assignments and denial of simple requests? "To be honest, that's exactly what I expected," he admits. But it hasn't come yet. Madden has ascended to the highest rank possible in his four years of service, a fact he relates with evident pride. Madden even speculates that, though his immediate superiors may not appreciate his activism, there are people above them protecting him.

Some antiwar groups, even those helping the appeal, have more sweeping goals. Kelly Dougherty, a spunky veteran of Colorado's National Guard, participated in the invasion of Iraq, patrolling Nasiriyah as a military police officer. She now heads Iraq Veterans Against War, which speaks with the strident voice of its Vietnam era predecessors, denouncing "the corporate pillaging" of Iraq, heroizing "war resisters," disseminating information about going AWOL, and calling for reparations for Iraq. The IVAW spirit is one of righteous anger, but it is cluttered with radicalism. Madden

approached the Capitol in a blue suit and tie. Dougherty wore a black sweatshirt and bandana around her hair.

The simple patriotism expressed in the appeal and by its spokesman may make it more attractive to civilians and military alike than more conventional protests. "The system" is not the enemy this time—the policy is. The signatories are not looking to reform all of American society but instead challenge an already unpopular war. There is no ideo-

also a chance to say to the public that the troops feel as they do. "I have faith in the American people. Congress has an approval rating of 30 percent, the president has an approval rating of 30 percent," he notes. "The American people will end this war."

For now, Madden is waiting to hear about his college applications to Northeastern and Emerson. He expects to receive his honorable discharge from the Marines later this year. His disap-

THE SIMPLE PATRIOTISM EXPRESSED IN THE APPEAL MAY MAKE IT MORE ATTRACTIVE TO CIVILIANS AND MILITARY ALIKE THAN CONVENTIONAL PROTESTS.

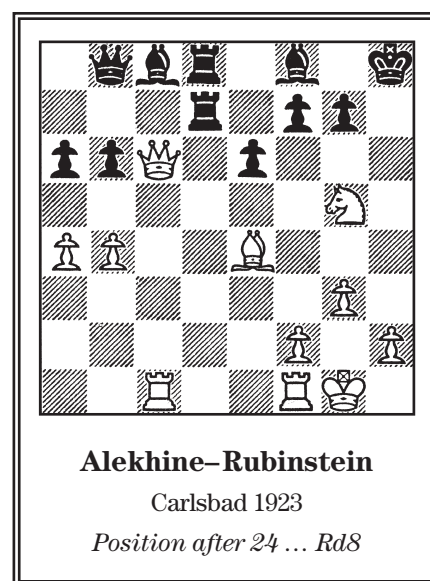
logical content to the appeal's language, and Madden's statements to the media have highlighted his gratitude for living in a country that affords him the right to speak, to seek redress, and to openly call for an end to the war.

Hutto announced the appeal in an editorial in the *Navy Times* on Oct. 29 last year. By word of mouth, it gathered nearly 1,000 signatures within eight weeks. For an all-volunteer force, this was unprecedented.

Receiving the appeal, Rep. Dennis Kucinich dared his fellow congressman to be brave and to begin defunding the war, "The American people voted for a change, and now Congress must respond." But when asked whether the appeal will have an important effect on their votes, Madden turns distinctly cold: "I'm a realist. I know that a thousand, or several thousand signatures isn't going to make votes for withdrawal appear from nowhere."

Then why risk it? According to Madden, Congress can receive his message or they can choose to ignore it. The appeal enters his name and his convictions into the Congressional Record. It's a chance to give other service members a voice they didn't know they had. It is

pointment with the media in the run up to the war in Iraq may have shaped his plan to major in journalism. But just as he volunteered for extra patrols in Al Anbar, he cannot put his life ahead of his comrades in arms. He joined the Marines to give his life direction before he went to college. Now he finds himself asked to visit university campuses as an antiwar speaker. The feeling these invitations inspire is familiar: he's reluctant but always proud to serve. ■



Arts & Letters

FILM

[Babel]

Communication Failure on Three Continents

By Steve Sailer

THE DIRECTOR and the screenwriter of “Babel,” the Golden Globe-winning Best Drama of 2006, have been feuding over who deserves credit for their trilogy of movies, which began with “Amores Perros” followed by the American art-house melodrama “21 Grams.” Is director Alejandro González Iñárritu the sole “auteur”? Or are he and writer Guillermo Arriaga the “auteurs”? Their spat culminated at Cannes, where the director banned the writer from attending “Babel’s” screening.

Although the screenplay is more fundamental, directors get the publicity because their jobs are harder. The writer resembles a staff general, who draws up a battle plan on paper during the long years of peace, and the director a line general who must execute it in the fog of war. On the set, directors must make countless quick decisions because the budgetary burn rate sometimes exceeds \$1,000 per minute.

“Babel,” however, renders this debate academic because there is blame enough for both in this interminable Oscar-whoring ordeal. It’s as contrived and implausible as last year’s Best Picture, “Crash,” but infinitely less entertaining. “Babel” is a compendium of all

the mannerisms most irritating in contemporary prestige cinema.

In its scenario’s portentous, tragic stupidity—every single character in this glum epic that sprawls across three continents can be counted on to do whatever would be most moronic at the moment—“Babel” resembles an Ingmar Bergman remake of “Idiocracy.”

Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett play (with zero charisma) a California couple whose marriage has faltered after their third child died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. To patch up their relationship, Brad drags Cate to Morocco, although its swarms of beggars and touts make it a difficult destination even for honeymooners. Winston Churchill thought Marrakech “the most lovely spot in the whole world,” but Morocco’s charm eludes the Mexican filmmakers, who depict it as a mud-colored wasteland inhabited by unhygienic fools.

While Brad and Cate mope along in a tour bus through the bleak desert, two adolescent Berber goatherds on a nearby hilltop decide to try out their new rifle by—why not?—shooting at passing vehicles. The younger and more obnoxious brother drills Cate in the neck. Instead of having his bleeding wife rushed to the nearest city hospital, Pitt insists on being driven to a village of mud huts ten miles off the highway to await an ambulance. There the other tourists, being heartless First Worlders, commandeer the bus and abandon them.

Meanwhile, back in San Diego, the couple’s illegal immigrant housekeeper wants to attend her son’s wedding in Tijuana, but she hasn’t arranged for anybody to look after Brad and Cate’s two adorable children. So she drags them along to Mexico in the car of her alcoholic, pistol-packing nephew. (The aris-

tocratic-looking Gael García Bernal, who was wonderful in “The Science of Sleep” but is miscast as a peasant here.)

On the way back to California, the evil border guards are reluctant to let a drunken Mexican national drive into America, so Gael floors it past the gate. More bad decision-making ensues, and the children almost die of thirst in the desert. The nanny gets deported, which is supposed to be a tragedy because, as she laments (even though all her family other than her fugitive nephew are in Mexico), “All my things are here.”

Finally, in Tokyo, a deaf-mute schoolgirl is frustrated that she can’t flirt with the cool guys. Who wants to go out with geeky deaf-mute boys just because they know sign language? While puerile, this segment is surprisingly well made, and it’s actually relevant to “Babel’s” purported theme of the difficulties of communication, but its relation to the main plot is trivially tangential.

Dreadful as the screenplay is, the trendy direction might be worse. González Iñárritu spent a fortune to make “Babel” look like it was filmed on a cellphone. The annoyingly shiny images lack saturated color and fine detail. And the jittery handheld camera work belongs in an episode of “Cops,” not in this 142-minute slog, where it induces motion sickness.

Worse, the gratuitously chaotic editing intentionally makes the story needlessly incomprehensible to the half of the population with two digit IQs. If you cut up a picture of dogs playing poker into a jigsaw puzzle, those with the ability and obsessiveness to reassemble it successfully will feel quite pleased with themselves, but it’s still just dogs playing poker. ■

Rated R for violence, some graphic nudity, sexual content, language, and some drug use.

BOOKS

[*Londonistan*, Melanie Phillips,
Encounter Books, 200 pages]

Speak the Queen's Urdu

By Theodore Dalrymple

HERE ARE A FEW STRAWS in the wind. The edition of the *British Medical Journal* for the week in which I write this carried a debate as to whether Muslims in Britain should have their own separate medical services. A couple of weeks ago, the BBC had a radio program devoted to legal affairs in which the pros and cons of recognizing *sharia* law in Britain were aired. On a visit to the English city in which I lived for years but live no longer, I went to the central library, one of the largest in the country, and found a table and chairs marked for the use of women (that is to say, Muslim women) only. The same day I received through the front door of the house in which I was staying a flyer from a Muslim city councilor who said he was opposed to the deletion of all official reference to Christmas in council publications because the culture of the whites was entitled to respect as well as others. On this very day, the newspapers carry reports of a young male Somali bomb plotter, resident in the city in which the library provides a table for Muslim women, who temporarily evaded the police by dressing in a burka, that female costume the prime minister's wife claimed in court that every British schoolgirl has the inalienable right to wear.

Of course, it isn't always easy to assess the significance of such facts: one has to steer a course between the Scylla of panic on the one hand and the Charybdis of complacency on the other. We are constantly told, for example, that the majority of Muslims is moderate, law-abiding, peaceful, and so forth. But is this any consolation when a substan-

tial minority is not, at least in their views? We need vigilance without vigilantism, which is not easy to achieve.

In this book, the British journalist Melanie Phillips documents not only the establishment and growth of Muslim extremist groups in London but the administrative incompetence and cultural weakness that permitted it to happen. Some of the pusillanimity that she records would be funny if it were not so deeply disturbing.

Phillips used to write for the great liberal newspapers in Britain, the *Guardian* and the *Observer*, but she became aware that liberal nostrums were not helping the very people they were supposed to help: those at the bottom end of the social scale. She wrote a famous book about the failings of the British educational system, and it is a sign of the rather peculiar and contorted ideological outlook of the British intelligentsia that her outrage at the evident failings of the system, and her firm belief that the children of the poor should be given as good an education as they are capable of benefiting from, should now be taken as a sign of ultramontane reaction that puts her in the camp of Joseph de Maistre.

Similarly, the sniggering response of the intelligentsia in Britain to this book is diagnostic of the very failings it exposes. None of the mainstream publishers had the guts to publish it. Their decision not to do so could not possibly have been based upon purely commercial reasoning, as the book has now gone through several reprints even without the assistance of any significant publicity.

Criticism of the author has been directed at her tone—hysterically earnest, too serious by half—but no one has pointed to any errors it contains or has argued that the facts she cites do not lead to her conclusions. The fact is that the British intelligentsia (I speak in generalities) is unable to distinguish seriousness from earnestness and light-heartedness from frivolity. Decadence is no doubt an overused term, but this is decadence if anything is: earnestness about the trivial and frivolity about the serious.

As Phillips demonstrates in chapter and verse, Britain has long allowed the most radical extremists to preach and recruit within its shores and has done so for a combination of reasons: a sense of superior but bogus sophistication, which believes that it is best to allow the hotheads (usually in receipt of generous social security payments) their little catharsis, their ideas being so obviously absurd and nugatory that it is impossible that they would believe in them deeply enough to act upon them; a loss of cultural confidence brought about by the long march through the institutions of intellectuals bent upon the destruction of all that existed before their own glorious advent; and straightforward moral, and even physical, cowardice. (In connection to this, I should cite my experience as a doctor working in an area with a large Muslim population, that the school inspectors never held Muslim parents to account for failing to send their daughters to school, though they would hold parents of any other religion to account for precisely the same thing.)

For more than 40 years, both British officials and intellectuals have been deeply evasive about the problems of mass immigration into the country. They have pretended that it makes no difference where the immigrants come from, why they come, or what culture and expectations they bring with them. More recently, they have praised cultural diversity as a good in itself, and so the more of it the better.

London is now the most cosmopolitan city in the world, and it is not uncommon to find schools where the children are not only unable to speak English but are unable to communicate with each other in any common language.

The image the multiculturalists have in mind is that of those middle-class areas of London in whose shopping areas there are now restaurants from many different parts of the world, existing perfectly happily side by side. There is no difficulty in eating Lebanese one day and Mexican the next, so why should there be any other cultural or political difficulties as a result of immigration?

It is perfectly true, of course, that immigrants often “fertilize” the country to which they move. They bring skills and often a willingness to work very hard to improve their lot. The latter virtue can, of course, be sapped by a too-generous provision of welfare benefits, and this is precisely what has happened in Europe with the disastrous consequence that a large class of disaffected and resentful first-generation youth has been created with a propensity to crime and, in the case of Muslims, to listen to the siren-call of extremism. Nevertheless, cultural differences are very important: recently, for example, Britain has absorbed between 500,000 and 1,000,000 immigrants from Poland without, so far as I am aware, any serious difficulty. Immigrants are not created equal.

Multiculturalists talk in generalities, but they would be hard put to name any specific cultural or economic benefits to Britain that the mass immigration of Somali nationals, for example, has brought. In fact, they have no interest whatsoever in Somali culture. (At least I have been to the country, and one of my treasured possessions is a Somali-English phrasebook from the period of Soviet influence there, with such useful phrases as “Hand me the opera glasses, please” and “What is the total annual output of your collective farm?”) They wouldn’t be able to name a single Somali dish, let alone a book, and only the very best-informed would know that immigrant Somali nationals have introduced a new stimulant, khat, whose leaves they often chew for hours on end. As Phillips shows, multiculturalism is the latest form of nihilism: it is not love of other cultures for their own sake, it is hatred of one’s own.

Whatever else may be said of fierce Muslims, they are definitely not nihilists. They are not relativists either. They believe that they are in possession of the truth, one and indivisible. For them, compromise is at best a mere tactic or a temporary truce until the balance of forces changes, as they now believe it will—entirely in their favor. Putting up Church of England clerics against them is like sending a 70-year-old into the ring to fight

Mike Tyson in his prime. Phillips’s most hilarious quotations come from the C. of E. clerics, most of whom probably wouldn’t be able to give a straight answer to the question of whether or not there was a God. But the unctuousness of British politicians is no better.

One of the dangers of all this is that multiculturalists are actually playing a game; they have no more intention of studying Sufi poetry in Farsi or Buddhist scriptures in Pali than Marie Antoinette had any intentions of taking up shepherding as a career. When, as a result of their game-playing, their societies come under real threat, they are likely to react with the self-righteous viciousness of the spurned lover. Their tolerance of everything will thus have led directly to pogroms and perhaps even to genocide, without ever having passed through good sense or intellectual honesty.

Phillips shows that weakness, vacillation, exhibitionist self-doubt and pusillanimity go to the very top of British society, up to and including the prime minister, who finds it possible to take action on a problem in proportion to the square of the distance of the problem from his own front door. Bombing foreign countries is absolutely no problem for him, but finding a way to prevent city councils from bowing to the demands of Muslim political entrepreneurs is quite beyond him. To do so would take deep moral courage, precisely the quality that the long march through the institutions has so disastrously sapped in the members of the elite such as he, which is precisely as Gramsci, that unwitting ally of Muslim fundamentalism, predicted and wanted.

This book makes uncomfortable reading, relieved only by the unintentional humor of the churchmen whom the author quotes as the leading appeasers. The spirit of Neville Chamberlain lives on, but without the extenuating circumstances that made Chamberlain a weak and misguided, rather than a bad, man. ■

Theodore Dalrymple is a British psychiatrist and a contributing editor to City Journal.

[*A Bee in the Mouth: Anger in America Now*, Peter Wood, Encounter Books, 303 pages]

Angri-cultural Revolution

By Florence King

WE DON’T HAVE TO READ very far into Peter Wood’s book before discovering that we are in for some deftly served-up fun. The author’s detached tone and understated approach to his subject of meltdown chic are deliciously evident in his story of Harvard administrator Norah Burch, who announced on her blog (AnnoyYourFriends.com) that she was ready to bomb the entire campus and hunt down with a shotgun everyone who dared to cross her. Later, after she was fired, she explained that she had merely been “calming my nerves” in what she described as “an electronic primal scream.” Wood writes,

Ms. Burch’s tone of wounded innocence—the death threats were, after all, a service to her employer, since they helped her return to productivity—is the crucial thing ... because she lives in a world where expressing anger—even in the hyperbolic terms of bombs and shotguns—is a legitimate form of self-expression. How can self-expression that doesn’t involve actual dynamite or bullets be taken amiss?

America has come a long way since George Washington made worried entries in his diary about his efforts to control his hot temper. In his time, displays of anger were regarded as evidence of lack of character, justifiable only by offenses against the code of male honor, an attitude that lasted two centuries and provided the plot for countless cowboy movies. In “Shane” and “High Noon,” anger is what the hero tries to avoid, maintaining a stance of quiet strength until, at last, he is forced

into “anger as a last resort...the kind of anger that, until just yesterday, Americans imagined as heroic.”

Just yesterday has vanished, taking with it what Wood calls the Old Anger. America is now an “Angri-Culture,” home to the New Anger, a stance of livid fury and churlish execration that is often given jaunty names like road rage, going postal, or Borking. The Angri-Culture’s movie hero counts to one instead of ten before going ballistic, and quiet strength, far from being proof of character, is a sin against the Sixties commandment to “let it all hang out.” As for the code of male honor, it is now observed only in criminal gangs.

When did the bee first fly into America’s mouth? Wood traces the onset of the Angri-Culture to the liberation movements of the Sixties, when constant marches, sit-ins, freedom rides, campus occupations, street theater, and “happenings” kept the national temperature at a permanent boiling point. The calendar filled up with “Days of Rage,” and ideas were replaced by obsessions, fixations, and monomanias: civil rights, Power to the People, oppression, irrelevance, “disrespect,” identity politics, unmeltable ethnics, and the mounting violence of antiwar protests.

There was also feminism, with consciousness-raising and anger workshops to help women get over being sweet ‘n’ nice. The longstanding theory that depression is the result of anger turned inward was dusted off for unliberated housewives around the same time that “women’s studies” hit the fan, inspiring feminist “herstorians” to claim that the world was once ruled by prehistoric battle queens with names like Castratrix who always turned their anger outward, like the scythe blades they attached to their chariot wheels, and who never spoke to men except in tones of sounding brass. That’s how you chased away the blues.

The upheavals of the Sixties made millions of Americans feel “empowered,” and it felt good. They had discovered that expressing anger was a new way of defining the self—“I’m angry;

therefore, I am”—and a lot easier than the old way of sacrifice and delayed pleasures. Preening themselves on what they called their “relevance” and “authenticity,” they were ready for the “human-potential movement” that sprang up in the Seventies, which came complete with its own anthem, “Free to Be You and Me,” rote chants of “I ... Am ... Somebody!,” and a movie that was the first to celebrate the New Anger.

“Five Easy Pieces,” in which Jack Nicholson wrecks a diner because he can’t get plain toast in place of a tuna sandwich, is a study in narcissism gone berserk. The “no substitutes” argument between Nicholson and the waitress, says Wood, “gives us an early version of anger as an egotistic performance of the liberated individual displaying his superiority to the dumb conformists who are aggravating props in his drama.”

THE ANGRI-CULTURE’S MOVIE HERO **COUNTS TO ONE INSTEAD OF TEN BEFORE GOING BALLISTIC**, AND QUIET STRENGTH, FAR FROM BEING PROOF OF CHARACTER, IS A SIN AGAINST THE **SIXTIES COMMANDMENT TO “LET IT ALL HANG OUT.”**

Wood finds the New Anger in all the expected places but what is surprising is the reaction to it: nearly total approval. Tennis ace John McEnroe, master of the screaming fit and unsurpassed in splotic umbrage addressed to referees, “has been missed since his retirement,” lamented a sportswriter, “no one has so captured fans’ imaginations.” Olympic skier Bode Miller, who called his sponsors “unbelievable a--holes,” is called “refreshingly honest” and “petulant and engaging.” The rule seems to be, says Wood, “Play angry or don’t play at all.” His rule applies even to party favors and stocking stuffers. An online gift shop offers Happy Bunny insult buttons (“You Suck”) and, a chat room favorite, the “Give Me Your Lunch Money” lunchbox. If we reflect on the unacknowledged truth that a person’s sadism can be measured by how often he says “just kidding,” this may be Wood’s most disturbing example.

Music is no longer the food of love. As the art form most accessible to effortless emotional response, it can tell us exactly where we are as a people at any given time. The author runs such a test on two popular songs, “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” from the Depression era, and the rap classic, “C.R.E.A.M.” (cash rules everything around me). The gap between the common humanity of the first song and the group identity of the second was bridged by Sixties folksingers, specifically Bob Dylan, who “helped teach a generation the imaginative possibilities of performed vexation,” and whose “Blowin’ in the Wind” was “one of those rare instances in which unspecified indignation actually works.”

Country music is relatively free of the New Anger. Nashville’s songs are not angry, Wood reminds us, they are songs

about anger. Their saving grace is that they treat life from childhood to old age and often include family values—Johnny Paycheck’s “Take This Job and Shove It” sounds angry, but there’s a catch: It’s about a man who no longer sees the point in working because “My woman done left an’ took all the reasons I was workin’ for.”

What makes country fans angriest is condescension by liberal elitists who call them dumb and make fun of their piety and patriotism. When we compare this reaction to the venomous alienation and contentious self-pity that pulsate through rap and hip-hop, we realize the extent to which popular music mirrors the red-state/blue-state cultural divide that is driving our politics.

The New Anger made its political debut when antiwar protesters stormed the 1968 Democrat convention. It achieved its first victory in 1987 when a rabid band of policy goths from every

salt lick on the Left joined forces to defeat U.S. Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork with a savage campaign of relentless vilification. All that remained after the dust settled was a new verb, "to bork: to destroy a political candidate without bothering to examine his qualifications for the job." The lesson was learned, writes Wood. "Debate is unnecessary; anger is enough."

In a normal political milieu, the Bork episode would be the acme of the New Anger, but starting in 1992 new summits rose up before us when we acquired the two most personally hated presidents in our history—one from each party. Between them they offered something for everybody. If you were into disgust and loathing, Bill Clinton was your man; if disdain and mockery turned you on, there was George W. Bush. What's more, you could say it with music. Conservatives, constrained by strict upbringings and manly stoicism, came late to the paroxysms of New Anger, but the odium

they heaped on Clinton's draft-dodging hippie past and Rhodes-scholar elitism was as unleashed as Merle Haggard's threat-filled tribute to Okies from Muskogee. And when liberal Jonathan Chait led off his *New Republic* confession with "I hate President George W. Bush. There, I said it," his puerile tone of sullen pride immediately conjured up a mental picture of Chait morphing into Eminem, nose ring, tattoos, and all.

"[T]he eruptions of anger against Clinton and Bush took us beyond vituperation to a kind of anger that luxuriated in its own vehemence," Wood concludes. "Conservatives saw Clinton as a man seducing the country into a cheaper version of itself—and, what was more galling still, succeeding. Democrats see Bush as tricking the country into becoming a meaner version of itself—and using the war on terror to make that change permanent."

Wood, the provost of King's College and a professor of anthropology, has written such a provocative book that one wishes he had dwelled longer on some of the issues he raises. Noting that "the French Revolution licensed a frenzy of anger and cruelty that the American Revolution generally avoided," he explains that Americans simply wanted a new government, while the French wanted "a new culture and a new emotional stance toward life." This is true as far as it goes, but it begs the question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his influence on Western civilization's attitude toward emotion. It was a lasting influence indeed—we see it on television all the time.

Rousseau was the 18th-century equivalent of a faddish self-help author on a book tour, a self-dramatizing babler who spoke in buzzwords. He believed that "natural man" had been ruined by civilization's emphasis on polished formality and "insincere" good manners, and that he could never again be the happy "noble savage" he once was until he put heart over head, emotion over logic, nature over culture, and soul over all. To this end, he urged pre-Revolutionary French society to think sweet sad

thoughts and cry; to "let it wash over you" until you were "drunk with emotion"—clichés that are with us still. He kept flacking his war on self-control until he had the French as conditioned as Pavlov's dogs. His message of "I feel; therefore, I am" encouraged a crude primitivism that spilled over into political anarchy and led to the sanguinary excesses of the Reign of Terror. Rousseau called his philosophy *sensibilité*; we call ours "getting in touch with your feelings," but both are fraught with the same danger: When you unleash one emotion you unleash them all. If we had less soul-baring and indiscriminate hugging we might have less anger.

Wood also ignores the bee in the ear. Nowadays any display of anger, even a crisply delivered declarative sentence, is likely to be greeted with a diagnosis of "out of control." It has joined the long list of euphemisms meaning crazy, and if enough armchair shrinks pin the rose on you, people will believe it. The blood libel is out and the Rohrschach libel is in, but the anger police are absent from Wood's book.

Finally, the author's efforts to connect identity crises and hysterical demands for one's "personal space" with the growth of the self-storage business—and even with the cryonics movement—is, to put it mildly, a stretch, albeit an entertaining one.

But enough carping. *A Bee in the Mouth* is a thoughtful, disturbing, and well-written book that examines what too many Americans have become: inarticulate on-line furies incapable of venturing beyond the S-word, the F-word, and their lists of everyone and everything that sucks. Too shallow to match the towering rage of Lear or the baleful imprecations of Achilles, they indulge in the sputtering, foot-stamping tantrums of Rumpelstiltskin. ■

Florence King, a regular columnist for National Review, is the author, most recently, of two collections: Stet Damnit! The Misanthrope's Corner, 1991-2002; and Deja Reviews: Florence King All Over Again.

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[*Sacred Causes: The Clash of Religion and Politics from the Great War to the War on Terror*, Michael Burleigh, HarperCollins, 557 pages]

Redeeming History

By Thomas E. Woods Jr.

BETWEEN RICHARD DAWKINS, Daniel Dennett, and Sam Harris, the past few years have witnessed a vitriolic string of attacks on organized religion, that terrible force from whose clutches the typical American teenager, full of knowledge and wisdom, never tires of announcing his glorious emancipation. These attacks went well beyond the usual claim that religion is a comforting, harmless delusion in which the weak or the intellectually deficient choose to take refuge. According to these critiques, religion is not only intellectually contemptible, but also a terrible scourge that with a few modest exceptions has produced nothing but misery for the human race.

These men are far from alone in taking such a stand. It has become increasingly common for intellectuals to extrapolate from the existence of Islamic terrorism the broader claim that religion per se amounts to little more than a source of irrationality and violence. In 2005, Muriel Gray declared in Scotland's *Sunday Herald*:

[T]he cause of all this misery, mayhem, violence, terror and ignorance is of course religion itself. . . . For the government of a secular country such as ours to treat religion as if it had real merit instead of regarding it as a ridiculous anachronism, which education, wisdom and experience can hopefully overcome in time, is one of the most depressing developments of the 21st century.

Likewise, Polly Toynbee wrote in the *Guardian*, "It is time now to get serious about religion—all religion—and draw a firm line between the real world and

the world of dreams." Matthew Parris suggested in the London *Spectator* that "what unites an 'extremist' mullah with a Catholic priest or evangelical Protestant minister is actually much more significant and interesting than what divides him from them."

Sacred Causes, Michael Burleigh's new book, is an implicit reply to these increasingly strident secularist claims. He finds that the most self-consciously secular regimes of the 20th century were not the beacons of reason and progress that the grand promises of secularism lead us to expect. The churches, moreover, have quite a bit to show for themselves other than obscurantism and violence. An important if hobbled counterweight to the totalitarian regimes, the churches, for example, played an important role in bringing down communism—not exactly an achievement to be sniffed at.

Burleigh is interested in chronicling the relationship between religious

forces (mainly Christian) and European regimes since World War I, and how the churches responded to the increasing claims of the political realm. He tells this important story superbly, with information and insight that can instruct even the expert. Burleigh is rightly contemptuous of the various strains of Christian leftism that became dominant in the 1960s, making it more difficult for the Christian world to operate as a counterforce to the secular state whose politically correct causes Christian leftists shared. He takes readers to the end of the Cold War and down through the present, with disorder in the Middle East and Islam challenging the tolerance of Europe.

Burleigh writes in an absorbing style and has a talent, reminiscent of Paul Johnson, for digging up long-forgotten historical episodes, though Burleigh is more organized and less idiosyncratic than his fellow British historian. Even

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when he repeats a familiar theme—the religious pretensions of the supposedly secular political ideologies of the 20th century—it is as if the reader encounters it for the first time. Consider this excerpt from the 1925 catechism of Italy's Balilla youth movement:

I believe in Rome the Eternal, the mother of my country, and in Italy her eldest Daughter, who was born in her virginal bosom by the grace of God; who suffered through the barbarian invasions, was crucified and buried; who descended to the grave and was raised from the dead in the nineteenth century; who ascended into Heaven in her glory in 1918 and 1922; who is seated on the right hand of her mother Rome; and who for this reason shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the genius of Mussolini, in our Holy Father Fascism, in the communion of its martyrs, in the conversion of Italians, and in the resurrection of the Empire.

Readers of *Sacred Causes* can expect to find much more evidence of politics as religion in recent European history.

Although far from uncritical of the Christian churches, *Sacred Causes* is certainly sympathetic, especially to the Catholic Church, whose wartime pope, Pius XII, has received a great deal of misplaced criticism since the 1960s. Among other sources, Burleigh cites Rabbi David G. Dalin's 2005 book *The Myth of Hitler's Pope: How Pope Pius XII Rescued Jews from the Nazis*. When defenders of Pius XII point out the avalanche of Jewish statements of thanks offered to the Pope shortly after the war ended, Pius's modern-day critics explain away these testimonies as mere flattery designed to win the Church's support for the Zionist program in Palestine—an explanation Burleigh finds not at all persuasive. It doesn't explain why Golda Meir composed a touching tribute to Pius upon his death in 1958, some ten years after Israeli independence, why Leonard Bernstein asked the audience of the New York Philharmonic to stand

for a moment of silence in honor of Pius XII, or why, when the left-wing writer Rolf Hochhuth portrayed Pius as indifferent to Jewish suffering in his fictional 1963 play "The Deputy," it was the Anti-Defamation League's representative in Rome who promptly composed a monograph in the wartime Pope's defense. Indeed, when we remember that Pius cooperated with anti-Nazi opposition to the point of encouraging German generals plotting the Führer's overthrow, and that the Nazis themselves devised a plan to kidnap the Pope, John Cornwell's story of Pius XII as "Hitler's Pope" grows ever more fanciful.

Burleigh is also quite interesting on the role of the churches in bringing down the Iron Curtain. The story in Poland is a familiar one, though as usual, Burleigh peppers his narrative with little-known facts and anecdotes. The election of a Polish pope in 1978 undoubtedly caused enormous problems for the Kremlin because the Pontiff's various appearances in his home country, attended by hundreds of thousands, helped the Poles realize just how numerous they were and what a tiny, isolated minority the Communist regime was. It was stunning for John Paul to tell his countrymen that the division of Europe worked out at Yalta was impermanent—a prediction that came true sooner than anyone expected.

Likewise in East Germany, the churches provided a rallying point for various strands of political opposition. According to Burleigh:

The key point was that the Churches helped them all overcome the intense atomization which the regime had deliberately fostered, be it isolating and persecuting active dissidents or encouraging individuals in harmless private pursuits. Now they came together in candlelit vigils and prayer, a mode of organization that was difficult to combat with police dogs and water cannons as the moral balance was so blatantly asymmetrical, while the peaceful

forms nullified the entire Communist mythology of violent revolutionary upheaval.

On the subject of Iraq and the War on Terror, however, Burleigh's views are much more conventional. He points to the "bitter divisions between so-called 'tough' liberals like Michael Ignatieff and Christopher Hitchens and those apparently less concerned with whether Iraqis and Afghans should enjoy the same rights as themselves." This is to suggest that the only reason anyone could oppose ruinously expensive, destabilizing wars around the world—and particularly a war in Iraq that has empowered the Shi'ites and greased the skids for *sharia* law—must be a cavalier indifference to the cause of justice. How an otherwise intelligent man could uncritically repeat such an embarrassing piece of state propaganda is a mystery I am at a loss to solve.

Furthermore, Burleigh treats Islamic terrorism as if it required no explanation. While one might argue that many Islamic fighters would do their terrible work even in the absence of Western or Israeli provocation, it is a stretch to assume from this point that sympathy for or actual involvement in Islamic radicalism is always and everywhere a purely spontaneous phenomenon arising out of a sudden realization that this is what the unadulterated Islamic faith demands. If that were so, al-Qaeda would not produce recruitment tapes featuring Israeli or U.S. government atrocities. Is it not conceivable that Muslims may be drawn to radicalism by witnessing repeated acts of injustice?

These are minor drawbacks that should not dissuade people from reading Burleigh's provocative and important book. It deserves to be widely read for the way it skillfully and convincingly presents the opposite of what usually passes in the Left's intellectual circles as the history of the 20th century. ■

Thomas E. Woods Jr., is the author, most recently, of How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization.

Spend It Like Beckham



The British media is up in arms because a nice young man by the name of David Beckham has accepted a vast sum of money to play soccer for

an American club. Here we have George W. Bush angling for war against Iran in the crowded Persian Gulf—and the Brits are in a lather about Beckham's defection. You would think he had been playing for an English club, an archrival of the unheard of LA Galaxy. But Beckham left Manchester United for Real Madrid three years ago after the English club treated him in the manner George Steinbrenner used to reserve for managers before Joe Torre.

Nothing makes an Englishman's blood boil more than seeing a fellow Brit strike it rich—which Beckham did, to the tune of \$250 million. He is 31 years old, the ex-captain of an English football team, obviously in the autumn of his sporting career, and he is offered a contract dreams are made of by an obscure Los Angeles club trying to lure soccer-mad Hispanics into its stadium. (The money comes from casinos, so don't feel too sorry for the obscure soccer club dishing out the moolah.). Of course he grabbed it, and of course he said what was expected of him: "I'm not doing it for the money, but for the challenge..."

The challenge, needless to say, is enormous. If Beckham manages to do what the great Pelé failed to, I will personally send a large check to William Kristol. Americans like contact games like football or fast, up-and-down games like basketball in which one uses his hands and not his feet. If soccer was ever going to catch on in the U.S., it would have done so long ago.

Beckham was picked because he has film star looks—he's a clean-cut man who is far healthier looking than the

sleaze balls Hollywood has been coming up with lately—and because of his wife. Victoria Beckham, or Posh Spice, is a former pop star who diets a lot and shops even more. The British tabloids loathe her and have been trying to wreck her life since she married David. I recently sat next to her at a luncheon in Rome, and she could not have been nicer and more polite. And she's a pretty little thing to boot, although too skinny for my taste. Where else but Los Angeles would this perfect, famous English couple end up? They even named their firstborn Brooklyn, which once upon a time had a baseball team that now plays out of LA. It's a natural fit.

BECKHAM HAS NOT BEEN THE IDEAL ENGLISH FOOTBALLER BECAUSE **HE DOESN'T SPIT ON HIS OPPONENTS, DOES NOT USE THE F-WORD ALL THE TIME, AND HAS MANAGED TO LIVE LIKE A GENTLEMAN** DESPITE BEING CONSTANTLY IN THE LIMELIGHT.

But back to the Brits and the hate that dares not speak its name. One of the most serious sportswriters took Beckham to task for "being a supreme striker of a dead ball [taking penalty kicks and fouls] but one who the further he traveled along his career path, the further he moved away from the idea of being a footballer first and foremost."

In this the hack was right. Beckham has not been the ideal English footballer because he doesn't spit on his opponents, does not use the F-word all the time, and although uneducated, has managed to live like a gentleman despite being constantly in the limelight. No

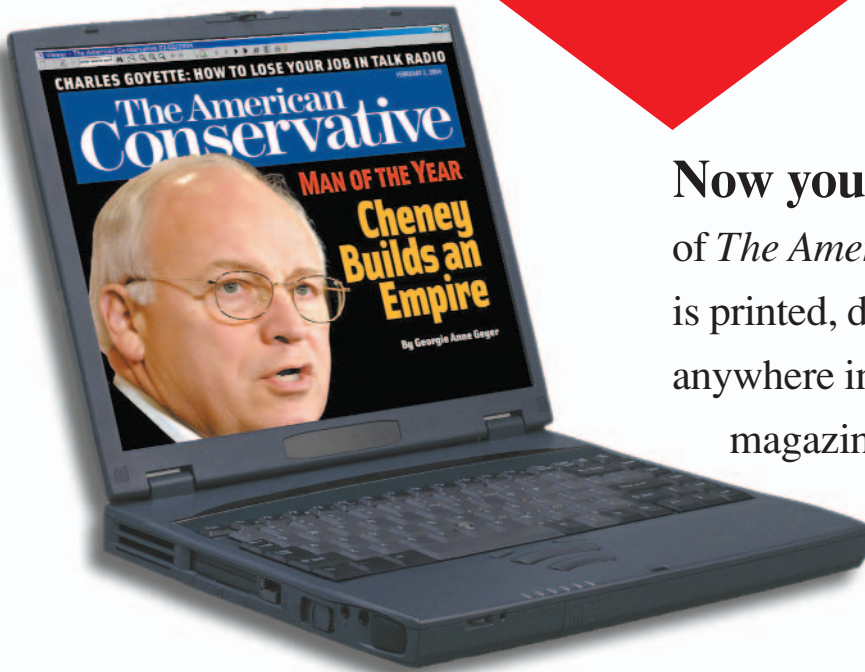
drugs, no public brawls, nothing to endear him to the British tabloids. Other writers openly abused him and Victoria for accepting lots of money. Journalists, especially British journalists, are known never to file false expenses, lie, set people up, or play tricks on innocents in order to enhance their salaries. "Beckham has decided to unroll the beach towel and reach for the sun tan lotion," railed one scribbler. "He should be drummed out of polite society for his greed," screamed another.

The worst, of course, is yet to come, especially if Beckham fails to turn Americans away from football, baseball, and basketball and into soccer freaks. When it emerged that Tom Cruise and Beckham were so-called friends—Hollywood is known for old-fashioned true friendship—the hacks could no longer contain themselves. "Beckham lost in space,"

was the kindest headline, an obvious reference to Tom Cruise's scientology beliefs that the human race is immortal and reincarnated from an alien spirit.

Reincarnated or not, Tom Cruise and John Travolta aside, a big bust or a star to be born, I wish Beckham luck. He is buying a house in LA and is moving his young family over there. He will be worth half a billion greenbacks by the time he hangs up his cleats—and he should buy a full-page ad in every British tabloid in which to tell the hacks what film stars he breaks bread with and how much money he is making per minute. ■

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